Michael Vickery's Cambodia 1975-1982 (1984) copy

michaelvickery.org/vickery1984cambodia.pdf

From author of "Democratic Kampuchea: CIA to the rescue"

> Vickery was a member of the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars. In Volume 21, 1989, he wrote:

>> "My first contribution (1982) to BCAS [Bulletin Of Concerned Asian Scholars] was on CIA falsification of Cambodian statistics. I believe the task of BCAS should be to counter U.S. regime misinformation and mainstream self-censorship, and provide well-researched progressive information on Asia and the Pacific...[sic]"[17]

and many other works on Cambodia, in its past and present

#### Dissertation

Cambodia After Angkor: The Chronicular Evidence for the Fourteenth to Sixteenth Centuries, Yale University, Ph.D., December 1977. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, University Microfilms.

#### Books

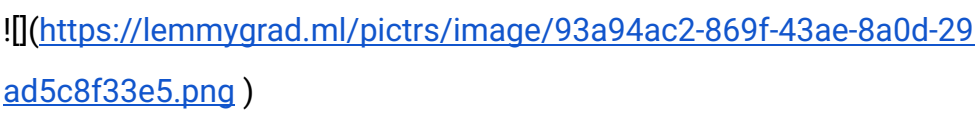
Cambodia 1975–1982, Boston, South End Press; Sydney, George Allen & Unwin, 1984; second edition, Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 1999.
Kampuchea, Politics, Economics and Society, Frances Pinter (Publishers), London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., Boulder, 1986.
Society, Economics and Politics in Pre-Angkor Cambodia: The 7th-8th Centuries, Tokyo, The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies for Unesco, The Toyo Bunko, 1998.
Cambodia: A Political Survey, Phnom Penh, Funan Press, 2007

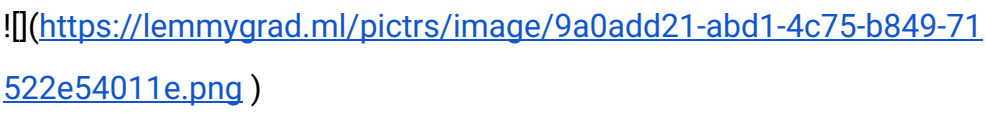
#### Collections

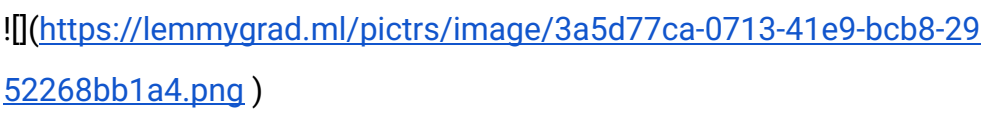
Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome in Cambodia, Collected Writings 1975–2010, published on-line, 2010[5], a book about anti-Vietnamese sentiment, especially in regards to Cambodia and the US

Rest in peace, Michael Vickery, in the lecture hall way up high at the equivalent of Chiang Mai (yeah I paraphrased that saying from Michael Parenti, a different Michael)

*Maps*






### INTRODUCTION TO THE 1999 IMPRINT

Perhaps the republication of a book like this without changes requires some explanation. The short answers are (1) no changes are required, and (2) there has been a continuing demand for it. Had the publisher's and my own schedules permitted I would have added numerous footnotes for points which may not be sufficiently dear to non-specialist readers, and introduced some new material which would have contributed to the discussion, especially in chapter 5 on the nature of the Cambodian Revolution, but nothing has been revealed since I wrote it which seriously undercuts the arguments made in the original text.

In spite of its first publication by a small and controversial publisher which was unable even to buy advertising space in the mainstream press, and the refusal of that press, with one or two exceptions, to review it, the first printing of three thousand sold very quickly, and a second printing also went within a few years. Since 1991, at least, the book has been virtually unavailable except through direct orders to the publishers who still hold a few copies, or when I pirated it myself in photocopy for acquaintances ..

Had I been more of a capitalist entrepreneur I would have made a few hundred copies to sell in Phnom Penh at the time of the UN intervention with its election in 1991-1993, for the demand was enhanced not only by word of mouth but by the apparently surprising circumstance that several of the international organizations involved in that intervention recommended the book as an introduction to contemporary Cambodia for their employees.

"Apparently surprising," because I had been criticized for relativizing the "genocidal Pol Pot regime." That assessment was accurate enough, because I did not, and still do not, consider "genocide" to be an accurate term for the radical social and economic experiments in which Cambodia's first generation of revolutionaries indulged, and because the effects of those radical policies differed widely over time and in different regions. I considered, and still do, that the total picture of Democratic Kampuchea (OK), the official name of the so-called "Khmer Rouge regime," required a historical treatment as though viewed from a distance, in the manner in which the horrors of the Thirty-Years War (1618-1648) or the Napoleonic wars are studied by historians.

As was written in the first scholarly treatment of the "Khmer Rouge," "we are going to claim that the events in Cambodia justify a rational type of analysis, like that applied in quite different situations.

By the time UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) arrived in Cambodia in 1992, however, relativization of

"Khmer Rouge horrors" was at the top of the agenda. The Paris Agreement of 1991 had bounced the "Parties of Democratic Kampuchea," that is, the "Khmer Rouge," back into international respectability, if that had not already been accomplished by the US-Chinese pressure to form the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) in 1982. That bastard child of Great Power Cold War diplomacy forced the royalists and the non-royalist anticommunists into an unviable union with the surviving military and administration of Democratic Kampuchea-a coalition of contras, cynically termed "the Resistance"-for the purpose of overthrowing the new government in Phnom Penh, simply because that government had allegedly been created by Vietnam and was developing with aid from Vietnam, the Soviet Bloc, and Cuba.

Throughout the 1980s and early '90s a member of the real DK occupied Cambodia' s UN seat in the name of the CGDK. They were fully represented in the Supreme National Council, created to represent the Cambodian state under UNTAC, and "genocide" was a forbidden word in official UNTAC discourse. When in November 1992 the UNTAC Human Rights Component organized a colloquium on human rights questions in Cambodia Ben Kiernan was prevented from distributing literature critical of DK, and both he and I were forbidden entrance to the discussions. Human rights issues then meant accusations against the Phnom Penh government and its Cambodian People's Party, not what had happened in 1975-1979.

This is why there was enthusiasm for Cambodia 1975-1982 in UNTAC, while my second book on revolutionary Cambodia,

Kampuchea: Politics, Economics, and Society, published in 1986, was never mentioned by, nor even known to, the newcomers who arrived with UNTAC. The transparent reason was that it was a sympathetic treatment of the post-1979 People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK)/State of Cambodia (soc) whose close relations with Vietnam, the bete noire of those countries dominant within UNTAC, made it a pariah regime, the removal of which was the transparent, if unavowed, goal of the 1993 election which UNTAC was formed to stage manage.

Chapter 4 of Cambodia 1975-1982 was also supportive of the PRK, but, ending in 1982, its position could still be seen as tentative.

If the suppression of "genocide" from UNTAC discourse seemed perverse then, it has since been revealed as thoroughly dishonest, for the only indubitable evidence of a DK genocidal policy was discovered by UNTAC intelligence in 1992-1993 and concerned DK policy then, not in 1975-1979.

In interviews with defecting DK soldiers, UNTAC'S Cambodia specialists discovered that in late 1992 the DK leadership decided to target any and all Vietnamese, men, women, and children, for assassination. This was apparently covered up by UKTAC authorities and was not revealed until 1996.2
Genocide, if the term is at all accurate, was also clearest with respect to Vietnamese in 1975-1979, but by 1975 there were too few Vietnamese left in Cambodia to give quantitative support to a

genocide argument; and in any case, killing of Vietnamese was not of great interest to most of the international anti-DK community in those years, as was clearly shown when they switched in 1979 to support for the DK in further violence against Vietnam and a Cambodian state close to Vietnam. Killing Vietnamese was what Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman once called a "benign bloodbath. "3

Along with my implied criticism here of Heder's treatment of the UNTAC silence on the new genocidal policy of DK in 1992-1993, I must note approvingly his support for relativization in general of the DK revolution. In an emotional plea for understanding Heder wrote that his encounter with the former DK soldiers in 1992-1993 "left this author [Heder] and other interviewers with a strong sense of the extent to which NADK [National Army of Democratic Kampuchea] combatants are ordinary Cambodians who are no less human than those who are found in the ranks of other political organizations or struggling to survive in the paddy fields, forests, cities, and towns of the nation. The interviews provided a demythologized picture of rank-and-file "Khmer Rouge," some of whom were a danger to society as individuals; but the vast majority of whom were probably not. Discussion with them and with villagers in the areas from which they came also revealed the extent to which most individual DK combatants, like their [Cambodian government] counterparts, were members of the local community who were not necessarily seen as particularly evil by those who knew them personally,"

Here is an eloquent answer to those who have fantasies of international tribunals pursuing former Khmer Rouge cadres down to village level, something which could ignite intra-village conflict and mini rebellions all over the country where surviving Khmer Rouge are integrated into their old communities. Then the steady if very gradual, increase in peace and security in ever wider areas of the countryside resulting from the defeat of the contras in July 1997 might be reversed. Such an outcome, however, may be an unavowed, perhaps even not fully conscious, objective of those calling for a purge of ex-KR, for what infuriates them is the prospect of recovery under the People's Party and Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Perhaps, however, the UNTAC enthusiasm for Cambodia 1975-1982 was an illusion.

What they really meant was another book entitled Cambodia 1975-1978. If so, it might nevertheless be seen as an even greater testimony to the success of my book, if such success may be measured by its imitators.

The latter work, edited by Karl D. Jackson and published in 1989, not only mimicked my title, but was designed as a sort of mirror image of Cambodia 1975-1982, with an introduction and seven of nine chapters written by four members of the US Foreign Service Jackson, Timothy Carney, Charles Twining, and Kenneth Quinn).4 It covers very much of the same material, with little difference in treatment of fact, but with a different "spin" on the details and interpretation. Surprisingly, given the different preconceptions and objectives of the

authors, there was no attempt to criticize my work, which is mentioned in only two footnotes, both concerned with one of the most sensitive points in my book, the level of demographic disaster during the DK period.

In the first footnote to his introduction, p. 3, Jackson, after his estimates, wrote, "For a radically different assessment see Vickery 1984 [Cambodia 1975-1982]." This reflects the "spin" of Cambodia 1975-1978. My assessments to which Jackson referred were not all "radically different," and where they were, they were rather well supported. I accepted roughly a half million "war-related deaths before the Khmer Rouge victory," not radically different from Jackson's six to seven hundred thousand.

But against his "less than 6 million" and "5.8 million survivors" for "the waning days of 1978" and "at the beginning of 1979," I had proposed 6.5-6.7 million at that time, supported by late 1980 UN and FAO estimates of 6 and 6.5 million people within Cambodia, not counting another half million or so in border camps and refugee centers. Jackon's figures were apparently based on "most journalists estimated the total population at 5-6 million at the beginning of 1979," a peculiar cover for writers pretending to be both scholars and Cambodia specialists, especially since the journalists concerned often got their information from Jackson's collaborators, if they had any real sources at all.

In another context on the same subject, Carney (p. 86, note 8) cited my work as "others argue that estimates of deaths" were overstated,

but added merely that "the question warrants a careful, nonpartisan study," refusing thus to attempt criticism of my estimate of less than one million deaths over a normal peacetime death rate during 1975-1979.

The Cambodia 1975-1978 imitators opted out of another chance to engage in critical discussion of their "other," to use a now trendy post-modernist term, when, Carney (p. 33, note 20) cited some "critical" and "sympathetic" treatments of the "Pol Pot regime," and "works of authors with greater background or better judgement in Cambodian affairs." The first were William Shawcross and Jean Lacouture, the second Gareth Porter, George Hildebrand and Laura Summers; and the last Francois Ponchaud and David Chandler

Cambodia 1975-1978, like Cambodia 1975-1982, concluded with a discussion of what I called, in chapter 5, "The Nature of the Cambodian Revolution," a treatment of its local precursors, comparison with other revolutionary situations, and a tentative sketch of possible intellectual historical backgrounds of DK ideology. Here also there is a mirror image quality in the last chapters by Quinn and Jackson, including some reverse intellectual history, less an explanation of sources contributing to DK ideology than an attempt to discredit the precursors via the disasters attributed to DK.

This is particularly the case in Jackson's "Intellectual Origins of the Khmer Rouge," where he abusively brings in Franz Fanon as a major

influence on those Khmer Rouge intellectuals who had studied in France (also in pp. 73-74 of Jackson's earlier chapter, "The Ideology of Total Revolution"). The details of Fanon's biography show that it is nearly impossible that those Cambodians ever met Fanon, and if they did, in the 1950s when they were in France, Fanon was then intent on becoming a doctor, not yet propagating revolution.

Moreover, the only work of Fanon cited by Jackson, The Wretched of the Earth, did not appear until the early 1960s, when the future DK leaders were fully immersed in Cambodian politics; those who wrote never referred to Fanon, and it is quite unlikely that they would have been interested in anything deriving from African experience. 5
It is in that part of my own work that I overlooked an interesting parallel although citing it is the sort of reverse intellectual history evoked above.

On one of my trips to Cambodia in the mid-1980s I met a Chilean engineer who had fled Pinochet's regime, worked with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and then came to Cambodia. He had read Cambodia 1975-1982 and his first comment to me was that DK, as seen through my book, was "pure Illichism." Until then I had paid no attention to the writing of Ivan Illich, but he was well known among the Latin American left, and his books Deschooling Society and Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health do suggest the same radical restructuring of society as envisaged by the DK intellectuals.

The experience of working with Illich related by some of the participants in the language schools which he founded in Mexico

suggests to me that he might not have been entirely serious in those two books, but rather wrote as a super-trendy radical of the time, out to epater les bourgeois. In any case Illich did not imagine, nor intend, that his prescriptions would result in the type of violent change seen in DK.

The subsequent trajectory of Regis Debray, whom I did discuss, suggests a similar pose. From a prophet of very radical revolution he became in the 1980s a French government representative sent to persuade Australia not to oppose French nuclear tests in the Pacific.

At least Debray, in his radical phase, became engaged in the practice of his theories to the extent of putting his life on the line.

It is even less likely than with respect to Fanon that the DK intellectuals had ever heard of Ivan Illich, let alone taken him as a guide. Nor, to the extent that some of their projects paralleled his, did they foresee, any more than he, much less desire, the tragedies which ensued.
They believed, perhaps along with Illich in terms of simplifying education and medicine, and adapting them to the needs of a poor rural society, more certainly along with Debray in terms of submersion in the demands of that rural society as they saw them, that they would eliminate the enormous inequities which they saw ravaging Cambodian society, and develop a simple, healthy, and eventually prosperous country of equal citizens.

Whatever the possibilities of such a transformation in the most favorable circumstances, and the DK leaders, along with Illich and Debray, were probably mistaken in their presuppositions, they began their experiments in the worst circumstances, just after a war which had killed hundreds of thousands, destroyed much of the country, and transformed the irritating inequalities of peacetime Cambodia into violent class hatred of one part of the population for the other.

They then added to their difficulties by appropriating and intensifying an ideological trait, not of their favored rural society, but of the urban petty-bourgeois milieu from which they had sprung, and which had been utilized by all previous elite regimes when chauvinistic fervor was found necessary to turn attention from internal problems. This was the suspicion, fear, and violent hatred of Vietnam and Vietnamese which led DK to its worst excesses, and just like Lon Nol's Khmer Republic, to a hopeless war with a much stronger neighbor who could have provided valuable help for a different sort of DK.

This was the real tragedy of recent Cambodian history. The DK leadership, like earlier Cambodian nationalists, went "full circle: radical student - active guerilla fighter and revolutionary - anti-Vietnamese nationalist - finally offering support to the U.S. against revolution in Indochina," and from 1979 to 1993 against peaceful rehabilitation of their own country.6

In offering this book again, with its critique of a journalistic Standard Total View (STV) of DK Cambodia, I would like to direct attention to a

new, and even more aberrant because of the greater available information, STV, which needs to be addressed now in view of the projects for another international intervention, in the form of tribunals to try the "Khmer Rouge" tailored to the requirements of the United States or China or other international actors, not to the requirements of a fragile Cambodian society which is in the process of reconstruction.

The authors of the new STY repeat endlessly the mantra of "Strongman" Hun Sen who organized a "bloody coup" in July 1997 to eliminate his royalist opponents, when most of those authors, and most diplomats in Phnom Penh, realize that what happened was quite different, although only Tony Kevin, a former Australian ambassador who was then present in Phnom Penh, has been willing to publicly offer a different interpretation?

The new STV also emphasizes "impunity" of the authorities, corruption, political, business, and society murders, as though those were specifically Cambodian defects, and the fault of the regime filled, in the terms of the STY, with "former Khmet: Rouge," when even casual perusal of the Thai press would show that with respect to those matters Cambodia is now no worse than its western neighbor which has always enjoyed favorable treatment, and was even qualified as a democratic member of the "Free World" during the forty or so years when it was run by military thugs. It is time to apply the same standards to Cambodia and the rest of Southeast Asia.

Presenting this book again may also stimulate the new generation of Cambodia specialists to continue and deepen research into the DK period as an interesting historical subject in itself, not just in a search for condemnation. The sources available when I wrote Cambodia 1975-1982 were minimal, mostly the oral accounts of recent refugees. Now the Cambodia Documentation Center in Phnom Penh and its former parent organization in the Yale Genocide Project possess thousands of documents from the DK period which may serve to fill out the history of DK society, economy, and administration, if they are used for that purpose, and not only for a narrow focus on condemnation of the DK leadership.

So far as I know only one person has started that type of anthropological history, but material is available to keep many busy for years. Cambodia should be studied as an interesting variation among the many paths engaged by the formerly colonized Third World after independence, not condemned as a unique aberration.

#### NOTES

1. Serge Thion, introduction to Khmer rouges.'. by Serge Thion and Ben Kiernan (Paris: ].-E.Hallier, Albin Michel, 1981) p.13.

2. Steve Heder, "The resumption of Armed Struggle, etc.," in Propaganda, Politics, and Violence in Cambodia, edited by Steve Heder and Judy Ledgerwood, Armonk . .\1. E. Sharpe, 1996, pp. 73-113. See especially pp. 94-103.

3. Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman. After the Cataclysm: Postwar Indochina and the Reconstruction of imperial Ideology). vol. 2 of The Political Economy of Human Rights (Boston: South End Press, 1979).

4. Karl D. Jackson, ed .. Cambodia 1975-1978 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989).

5. I intend to discuss this question of Fanon in a subsequent publication.

6. Quotation from the first edition of Cambodia 1975-1982, p. 289, comparing Pol Pot with Son Ngoc Thanh.

7. Tony Kevin, "U.S. Errs in Cambodia Policy," FEER 21 (May 1998). p. 37: a..'1d "Cambodia Prepares for National Elections," The Asia-Pacific Magazine no. 9/10, 1998. D222/1.17
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## Preface and Acknowledgements

This book is intended as a contribution to the history of Cambodia between April 1975 and 1982 - the period of Democratic Kampuchea (the so-called ‘Pol Pot Regime’) from April 1975 to January 1979 and the first three years of the succeeding People’s Republic of Kampuchea (‘Heng Samrin Regime’). The formulation ‘contribution to

the history of Cambodia' has been chosen with all deliberation. I do not claim to have written The History of Cambodia, nor even A History of Cambodia for the period in question, primarily, as is explained in chapter 2, because the sources used are too incomplete and unrepresentative of the Cambodian population as a whole.

Those sources merit the attention given them, but entire areas of information essential for The History of Cambodia remain untouched by them and cannot yet be studied adequately from other sources either. If the form and emphasis of the book are determined in part by the sources used, they also depend in some measure on my own experiences of Cambodia, which began in 1960.

I first arrived in Cambodia in July 1960 to begin work as an English language teacher in local high schools under one of the U.S. government aid programs to that country. In that capacity I spent nearly four years in Cambodia, the first two in Kompong Thom, then a year in Siemreap, and a fourth academic year in Phnom Penh, cut short in March 1964 as a result of Sihanouk's termination of all U.S. aid projects.

During that time I acquired fluency in Khmer, began studying, through examination of old newspaper files and conversations with friends, the post-1945 political history of Cambodia, and decided to make the country the main focus of academic research which I intended to undertake.

In March 1964 I was transferred to a similar position in Vientiane, Laos, where I remained for three more years and during which I was able to make regular extended visits to Cambodia. Then, after spending three years (1967-70) at Yale University, I returned to Cambodia in late 1970 for nearly two years of dissertation research there and in Thailand; and except for one more brief visit in 1974 I was then cut off from direct contact with the country until 1981, when I was able to travel there for three weeks. Although my original interest in Cambodia was in the contemporary period, I kept pushing further back into the country's history until I produced a dissertation and other writings on the 14th-16th centuries, something which occupied most of my research time from 1970 through 1977; and after 1973 I virtually ceased collecting or organizing material on the contemporary situation.

The turn taken by the revolution after April 1975 surprised me as it did nearly everyone else, but I found the first wave of atrocity stories over the next year suspect and felt that given the squalid record of our own country in Indochina, Americans who could not view the new developments with at least qualified optimism should shut up. Until early 1980 I did not try to follow information about Democratic Kampuchea systematically. Besides the newspapers readily available in Penang, where I worked from 1973 to 1979, in Bangkok, and from late 1979 in Canberra, I read no more than Francois Ponchaud's Cambodia Year Zero, Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman's After the Cataclysm: Postwar Indochina and the Reconstruction of Imperial Ideology, to which I contributed impressions of a visit to a refugee

camp in 1976, and a pre-publication draft of Ben Kiernan's "Conflict in the Kampuchean Communist Movement."

In February 1980 I received word from a family whom I had known well that they had all (20 persons) survived and were in the Khao I Dang refugee center in Thailand. Because of that news I went to Thailand in April, and during most of the next few months, until the end of September, worked for the International Rescue Committee's educational program in the Khao I Dang and Sakeo camps, where I tried to collect information about life in Cambodia since 1975.

It was soon apparent that the refugees had a wide variety of experiences to report, that conditions in Cambodia during 1975-79 had differed significantly according to place and time, and that some of my doubts about the standard media treatment of Cambodia had been well founded. This was the main impetus to collecting the information which is presented here.

Only after returning to Canberra in October 1980 did I attempt to systematize the information as it is presented in chapters 3 and 4; and it was only then that I read some of the material published earlier on Cambodia's fate after 1975. I had only begun to read Stephen Heder's work mid-way through my time at Khao I Dang, and I did not look at Barron and Paul's Murder of a Gentle Land nor the work of Kenneth Quinn until November 1980. Thus the way in which the material for this book was collected and organized was very little affected by previous work on revolutionary Cambodia, and it resulted almost entirely from at first random contacts with refugees on the

part of a foreign historian of Cambodia who had known the country fairly well before the war and who was a competent speaker of the language.

To the extent that the contacts were not random, it was a result of a search for people who had lived in regions not well represented in Khao I Dang, that is, anywhere except the Northwest or pre-1975 Phnom Penh, whose inhabitants made up over 70% of the Khao I Dang population.

I have made no attempt to count the number of people with whom I talked, nor even the number of people whose stories have directly contributed to the present work. Interested readers can do that for themselves. There is no claim here for statistical validity nor, given the conditions, could any-statistically valid study have been undertaken. I was admittedly most interested in people whose experiences were different from the stories which had been given prominence in the international press, and I found my most valuable sources among those whose variety of experience, education, or intelligence enabled them not only to report their own experiences but also to make wider observations about conditions in Cambodia. My purpose has not been primarily to chronicle individual experiences, but at a higher level of abstraction to deal with general situations over rather wide areas. That the results have probably not been skewed by the statistically insufficient number of informants is indicated by the circumstance that Ben Kiernan's information from an entirely different body of informants agrees with the areal and temporal patterns I have inferred, and interviews conducted by

others, to the extent that they have been presented in a comparable manner, also support those relative conclusions even if there is a difference of opinion about absolute levels of suffering.

Although there is a scholarly apparatus indicating the source of each item of information, the purpose, contrary to that of most such edifices, is to prevent, rather than facilitate, direct access to the sources by the reader. Some people requested anonymity for various reasons, and since many informants provided me with information contrary to the accepted view of Cambodia and which they themselves might regret seeing in the context in which I have used it, I thought it best to protect them all from harassment which might ensue. Thus the anonymity of most sources has been protected by using only initials or pseudonyms, and the only exceptions are people whose names have already been published elsewhere. The same initials always indicate the same person, and there has been no further attempt to disguise their identities through alteration of the details of their stories.

Some of the previously published work on Cambodia has been discussed and its information integrated into my own constructions. There has not, however, been any attempt to survey the literature about Cambodia during 1975-82. I have given attention primarily to work which represents either personal experience (Pin Yathay, Ping Ling) or direct questioning of Khmers (Barron and Paul, Carney, Heder, Honda, Kiernan, Ponchaud, Quinn) and which either adds to the picture I present or which in my opinion requires critique. Unless they were useful for illustrating a particular point, I have neglected

those writings which are at third-hand, which are commentaries on the work of those who deal with primary sources, or which are exegeses of exegeses. Thus there may be people who have previously said some of the things I say or imply here, and my neglect of their work should not be taken to imply either disapproval or ignorance. It is simply because I have chosen to limit my discussion principally to my own and others' collections of primary material, and I did not read other secondary compilations until my own material had been organized.

Several important areas of the recent history of Cambodia have been ignored. Except for the conflict with Vietnam, foreign relations have not been discussed at all, and even if the intricacies of relations with China, for instance, are interesting, I consider that foreign relations and influences are very nearly irrelevant for an understanding of the internal situation, which is the subject of this book.

There is also very little here about the structure and function of the governmental apparatus of Democratic Kampuchea - how decisions were made, how the distribution of produce was organized, how policies were determined and instructions for their implementation transmitted. Beyond the impressions which are recorded, that information was not to be found among my sources, and it may still not be available anywhere. Most of the Democratic Kampuchea officials in positions to know are either dead or still part of the DK forces, and virtually no documentary evidence on such matters has been preserved within Cambodia.

More could have been said about the history of Cambodian communism and the organizations which have represented it, but the specialist on those questions, Ben Kiernan, is soon to produce a dissertation on the subject, and I have included here only what is necessary for clarification of the events of 1975-1982.

In addition to those whose stories are the material of this book, I wish to express thanks to a number of people who, beginning in 1960, first helped me to learn about Cambodia or who since 1979 aided and encouraged my work.

My wife Anchina and her family, from Battambang, were invaluable guides into the lives of ordinary Cambodians, and the family was instrumental in arranging some of my most interesting contacts in Khao I Dang.

My trip to Thailand in 1980 was facilitated by research and travel grants from the Australian National University, where I held the post of Research Fellow in the Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History, Research School of Pacific Studies; and the wide freedom offered by that institution provided the time necessary to complete the work.

The International Rescue Committee, under its then director for Thailand, Pierce Geretty, by taking me on in their educational program, made possible free access to the Khmer refugee centers in Thailand, without which the research could not have been

undertaken. Since IRC has acquired the reputation of promoting a certain political line, I wish to state that its personnel involved in Khmer refugee work did not show any such ideological limitations and were sincerely working to improve the conditions of refugees and advance the eventual recovery of Cambodia.

A number of people in other aid organizations helped me in various ways to find interesting sources and collect material, and if I do not try to mention them by name it is because I know some of them require anonymity.

Timothy Carney, Stephen Heder, Ben Kiernan, and Serge Thion all provided me with information from their own research and shared their own insights into Cambodian problems; Noam Chomsky gave much encouragement and often sent published material which I might otherwise have missed; and David Chandler took great interest in the project from its beginning, offering helpful advice and searching out relevant historical material.

John Barbalet, David Chandler, Noam Chomsky, Otome Hutheesing, Ben Kiernan, David Marr, Glenn May, Alfred McCoy, Ansari Nawawi, William O'Malley, Sandra Power, Andrew Watson, and Gehan Wijeyewardene read parts or all of either an early draft or the finished manuscript, offering helpful criticisms. If I did not always incorporate their suggestions, it does not mean I did not give them careful attention or appreciate the thought which was involved. Many parts of the finished product have been greatly improved through their suggested revisions.

# Chapter 1 Gentle Land

The first thirty kilometers northwards from the main road were not too bad, and we covered them in half an hour. The next thirty over rough, dusty roads, took about twice as long, and toward the end of that stretch we saw something new to our experience - wild-looking boys, alone or in twos and threes carrying dead lizards strung on sticks like freshly caught fish. They were obviously hunting them to take home for the family dinner - a type of beast not eaten at all in any other part of the country I had seen. The last thirty kilometers to the village took about two hours, for the road had become nothing more than a track across dried out former rice fields and there was a bump every few yards over what had once served as the embankments around the quadrangular plots.

On arrival in the village we stopped at the sala, an open pavilion found in all villages and used either for meetings or for temporary shelter. In fact, we expected that someone would invite us to his house to sleep and eat, as was common in Cambodian villages, but the people seemed strangely hostile.

They grudgingly said yes, we could sleep in the sala, but they hoped we had brought our own food, for they had no rice - not having been able to plant for three years because of drought. We also heard mutterings to the effect that they didn’t like city people anyway, for their arrival generally meant trouble.

The above is not an account of the arrival of ‘new’ people, former city dwellers, arriving in a revolutionary village after April 1975, nor the report of a journalist in Cambodia in 1979-80, but impressions of a trip I made in 1962 to visit the Angkor-period temple of Banteay Chhmar.1 Three of the details, however, recur constantly in the reminiscences of urban refugees: eating lizards and other exotic fauna, no rice, hostility of villagers toward city people; and it is this which makes the anecdote relevant as a starting point for a book about Cambodia during 1975-81.

One of the most typical horror stories of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) is that of city families sent out to primitive villages or forest areas where there was little or no rice, where they had to forage for all sorts of unfamiliar food - lizards, snakes, field crabs, insects, roots; where the local people, if any, were hostile; and where many of them died of hunger and disease, if not by execution.

The continuation of my own story is more cheerful. It is true that the Banteay Chhmar villagers had no rice, but they didn’t miss it, because they could find wild tubers and other vegetables in the forest, while protein was provided by chickens, pigs, fish caught in a pond not too far away, and of course the lizards caught by the boys along the road. Indeed it seemed to be one of the healthiest backwoods villages I had seen, with large families of cheerful, robust children. There was also an interesting, and potentially valuable, cottage industry.

The villagers made beautiful silk, handling every stage of the process from raising the worms to dyeing and weaving the cloth. Perhaps, I

first thought, this was their secret. They took their silk down to the market at Thmar Puok, 25 kilometers away, to trade for rice, sugar and other goods. But my offer to buy some proved the contrary. The silk was for their own use; they had never sold any and didn't want to; and when I tried to convince them I would give a good price which they could later spend in the market, they said there was nothing in the market they wanted. And I never did get any silk.

Another interesting feature of the village was the people's dislike of anyone and anything from the towns of Cambodia. They had seen officials, some of very high rank, who had come to visit the temple or inspect the border area. The villagers hated their pretensions and false promises of aid and development. Most of all they disliked the officials' wives, who minced about the footpaths in high heels with handkerchiefs held to their noses. Such people meant only trouble and it was best to avoid them and to hope that they never came to the village.

Thus for reasons of climate, inaccessibility, and incompatibility Banteay Chhmar village had evolved a nearly autonomous, autarkic lifestyle, wanting only to be left alone. Such villages were numerous outside the central rice plain and their inhabitants probably felt they had made successful adjustments to fate. At best they seemed healthy and happy, but had no access to modern medicine or to schooling beyond the bare rudiments, and often, as in Banteay Chhmar, did not have even a Buddhist temple or monks.

Perhaps it appears idiosyncratic to start a book about contemporary Cambodia with an anecdote about an excursion in 1962. But a major fault of most writing about recent events has been its ahistorical character, ignoring all that happened before 1970, 1975, or even 1979; and my purpose here is to emphasize that this is intended as an historical study, and to situate the events of 1975-81 within a view of earlier Cambodian society.

No precise estimate can be made of the number of such villages in pre-1970 Cambodia, or the percentage of the total population living in them; but it is at least fair to say that the region of happy, Buddhist, rice-growing peasants of conventional-wisdom Cambodia was restricted approximately to the inundated area shown on Map 2. Outside that area life was quite different, even if not to the extreme of Banteay Chhmar. This other Cambodia was virtually untouched by any kind of ethnographical or sociological study, but from the few glimpses we have we can safely say that no assumptions about Cambodian life, attitudes, mores, and beliefs based on observations of the central rice-growing and gardening zones are likely to be accurate for the outer regions.

In some parts of the country these outer regions began within 8 kms of a provincial center. This was the case in Kompong Thom where immediately to the northwest of the town was the forest homeland of the Kuy, who spoke a language related to Khmer but which was unintelligible to Khmer speakers, and whose way of life was very different from that of even the poorest Khmer peasants of the province.

The latter, in spite of appearing more ‘civilized,’ must nevertheless have wished on occasion that their own relative isolation was more absolute. Officials on weekend picnics, or entertaining guests, would often drop into a village and request a housewife to kill a chicken and prepare a meal - and a request in those circumstances was equivalent to an order. If a foreign guest was present, the officials would take the occasion to deliver themselves of a little homily to the effect that the Cambodian peasant was so prosperous that a sudden requisition of food was no burden, and so hospitable that the task was not felt as an imposition. It is true that in those days - the early 1960s - no peasant family was going to starve by giving away a couple of chickens and a few bowls of rice; but on an occasion I witnessed, there was no doubt about the resentment which was felt.

The resentment could sometimes turn into overt hostility. Downriver a few miles from Kompong Thom, and well within the inundated region of ‘civilized’ rice peasantry was a hamlet to which strangers were warned never to go, at the risk of being physically attacked. The precise reason was never made clear, but it was the result of some official action, possibly in French colonial days, which was perceived by the villagers as an atrocity and for which they threatened to take revenge if an opportunity arose.

In Siemreap the ‘other’ Cambodia began on the north side of the West Baray artificial lake and the park of Angkor and continued across the northern provinces to the Dangrek mountains. The population, at least between Siemreap and Phnom Kulen, were ethnic

Khmer, living by forest gathering and hunting as much as by cultivation, and practicing strange rites rather than the official Buddhism. On the few occasions when I met them, while exploring the old temples of the region, they were not hostile, rather apprehensive in the presence of strangers, but clearly of a world entirely foreign to even a provincial town such as Siemreap, let alone Phnom Penh.

Exotic mores, as seen from Phnom Penh, could also be found well within the rice zone and among people who would count as ordinary, even comfortably prosperous, Cambodian peasants. On a trip downriver from Battambang to the Tonle Sap inland sea in 1966 I encountered a community where the most important ritual center was not Buddhist, but a spirit temple at whose foundation - apparently within living memory - a live pregnant woman had been buried; where the men - former Issaraks - liked to joke over a fresh turtle dinner about the similarity in taste of that animal’s liver to the human variety; and where a woman who swallowed the raw gallbladders of freshly killed black dogs as a tonic was considered only mildly eccentric.2

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In some places the line of demarcation between the two kinds of peasantry was apparently quite clear. One of my most useful

informants at the Khao I Dang (KID) refugee camp,3 speaking of his native district in Kampot province, told me that north of the road running between Chhouk and Kampot the population was isolated, hostile to everything urban, and, incidentally, revolutionary from long before 1970, while south of that road the peasants interacted with the market, were familiar with urban ways, and considered themselves part of wider Cambodian society. My informant was himself from north of the road, but had gone through high school and on to the university in Phnom Penh where he was caught by the downfall of the Lon Nol regime in 1975, sent back to Kampot as one of the 'new' people, and forced to spend the next 312 years working as a peasant. In this capacity, although he at first went to see his parents and former neighbors, he found it advisable to settle in a different hamlet where he was less well known, because of the general hostility to city folk, even those who were originally local sons.

I also met one of his friends who had had the same experiences, but whose origins were south of the road. The contrast between the two with respect to their feelings about pre-war society, their experiences of 1975-79, cooperation in the running of the refugee camp, and productive work in general was a vivid illustration of the two kinds of villagers, and one which did not redound to the credit of the 'southerner.' In particular, and a subject which is a major concern of this book, in their accounts of the DK period these two men of identical economic, regional, and educational background and identical experiences during 1975-79 ordered their facts in such different ways and embellished them with such different value

judgments that it would have been impossible to realize that they were telling, in essentials, the same story.

Cambodia, long before the enforced split into ‘old’ and ‘new’ people in 1975, was deeply divided. An important division was between town and country. But a more profound division lay between town plus town-related rice and garden peasantry and those rural groups who, through distance, poverty, ingrained hostility, or a conscious preference for autarky, remained on the outside of the Cambodian society which everyone knew and which Phnom Penh considered the only Cambodian society of any importance.

This outer society was not necessarily poorer. Food could be plentiful, and the people in Banteay Chhmar appeared healthy. Indeed, their knowledge of the environment and ability to cope with it were impressive. With no more than a sharp knife a man could go into the forest, build shelter and find food; and such knowledge was still preserved among many of the real rice peasants as well.

Since they lived successfully in those conditions they probably saw no reason why other people, for instance the urban evacuees of April 1975, could not adjust; and they might easily imagine that failure to adjust was the result of laziness, corruption, or factiousness. Of course, there must also have been some schadenfreude at seeing the pretentious city folk brought down to their level, for villages like Banteay Chhmar, if they had not produced Communist soldiers or cadres, were at least part of the ‘old’ people, of the base areas,

whose long-suppressed resentment occasionally exploded in violence, however unjustified.

I remember in particular one spy they caught. He was very tough and wasn't afraid of dying at all. He refused to confess, and only seemed to show some fear when they brought him to the edge of the burial pit. There at the edge the executioners hit him on the nape of the neck a couple of times with their clubs (made of kranhung hardwood, about one meter long, used to save bullets), he fell into the pit, twitched a bit, and then was still. For cruelty this was only an average execution, because the executioners were in a hurry. There were other methods really revolting to observe.

One of them had a special name, srangae pen, literally 'a field crab crawling around in circles.' First of all the victim was beaten senseless. Then his arms were tied behind his back with the elbows pulled together and he was made to kneel beside his grave. The soldiers stood around him in a circle and the executioner began to perform a ritual dance with a sword. While dancing he would suddenly come close to the prisoner and cut his neck just a little, just enough to make blood flow. Then he bent down and licked up the blood from the wounded neck and spit it onto the sword blade. This ceremony was repeated several times until finally the sword was plunged into the prisoner's throat and he fell into the grave.4

On another occasion a man believed to be an enemy agent was seized and interrogated. He denied the accusation and was threatened with death. He continued to deny his guilt and one of the

interrogators struck him on the forehead with a pistol butt. Blood gushed from his head and mouth, but he still protested his innocence. Then they took turns kicking him in the stomach and he rolled on the ground in pain. Still he refused to confess and the group's political leader decided they really didn't have enough evidence on him. He was told he could get up and go away, but at about 10m distance from the group they shot him in the back and killed him. Eventually it was discovered that the man was innocent, but that the cadres were angry with him for protecting his sister against their attempts at seduction and had fabricated evidence that he was a traitor.

These stories do not come from Pol Pot's Cambodia, but from a book by Bun Chan Mol, published in 1973 and relating his own experiences among the Cambodian Issaraks in the 1940s.5 He himself was political leader of the group carrying out the executions, the enemy for whom the prisoners were accused of working was the French colonial administration, and the title of the book is Charit Khmer, "Khmer Mores."6 Bun Chan Mol gave up Issarak activities in 1949; and one of the reasons, he tells us in his book, was his inability to either tolerate or suppress the gratuitous brutality of his underlings who considered such methods a normal way of dealing with enemies and who took obvious pleasure in it.

Besides their delight in inhuman torture, he complains about their indiscipline, refusal to investigate thoroughly before taking action, arbitrary exercise of power, sometimes for petty personal reasons, and suspicion of anyone, including himself, their political chief, who

objected. He calls these practices part of “Khmer Mores,” the title of his book, most of which deals with the decline of Khmer politics in the 1950s and 1960s. Swift and arbitrary capital punishment was also not foreign to those early Cambodian rebels whose standards of discipline were high, who had an immense popular following, and who for years afterward were idealized by non-communist progressives.

Son Ngoc Thanh, during his brief tenure as prime minister in 1945, was blamed for executions of political opponents, and later, in his maquis in northern Cambodia, harsh justice for infringement of rules was an accepted norm. In a French intelligence report of 1952 his lieutenant, Ea Sichau, who was considered both then and afterward a sincere idealist with high standards of morality, is said to have executed, on the grounds that they were enemy agents, a group of 8 students and teachers who had found jungle life too difficult and wished to go home.7

In this respect, the one difference between Thanh and Sichau, and the earlier Issaraks or later Democratic Kampuchea cadres, is that the regulations of the first were consistent, equally and fairly applied, and recognized in advance by the people who joined them.

Issarak violence was not the specialty of the politically unstable frontier area of Battambang and Siemreap. Just 30 km southwest of Phnom Penh, in a district of semi-urbanized rice peasants, “the Issarak were their own law … killed anyone they wanted to kill … sometimes siblings could not speak to one another because one

was an Issarak and the other worked for the government in Phnom Penh"; and a number of families fled temporarily to Phnom Penh to escape from the threat of such Issarak extremism.8

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Often the vocation of Issarak was no more than a device to give a patriotic cover to banditry, which had long been endemic in parts of rural Cambodia; and the 'bandit charisma' may have been as strong a motive as nationalism in attracting men to Issarak life.9

Patterns of extreme violence against people defined as enemies, however arbitrarily, have very long roots in Cambodia. As a scholar specializing in 19th-century Cambodia has expressed it: "it is difficult to overstress the atmosphere of physical danger and the currents of insecurity and random violence that run through the chronicles and, obviously through so much of Cambodian life in this period. The chronicles are filled with references to public executions, ambushes, torture, village-burnings and forced emigrations." Although fighting was localized and forces small, "invaders and defenders destroyed the villages they fought for and the landscapes they moved across." "Prisoners were tortured and killed … as a matter of course." Even in times of peace, there were no institutional restraints on okya [a high official rank] or on other Cambodians who had mobilized a following."10

Sudden arbitrary violence was still part of the experience of many rural Cambodians in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. A woman acquaintance told me how her father, a Battambang Issarak leader at the time of which Bun Chan Mol was writing, used to keep his prisoners chained up beneath the house without food or water and then execute them on his own firing range a few hundred yards beyond the backyard. He was not a pathological sadist either, but a good family man remembered fondly by his widow and children. Later, in the Sihanouk years, the same woman was accused falsely by police of being involved in Dap Chhuon's movement and threatened with torture.11 She was saved, not because she was innocent, but because an uncle, who was a colonel in Phnom Penh, found out about her arrest and intervened.

Probably few Cambodians entertained doubts that traitors, or even enemies, should be killed. When a teacher friend in Kompong Thom in 1961, victim of a politically inspired denunciation, was accused of conspiring with an 'American agent' (myself) he had to resort to a highly placed uncle for protection. The latter intervened, but told his nephew that if he were really guilty of what had been alleged - in fact nothing more serious than political conversations with a foreigner - he deserved death. Likewise, a Cambodian student who returned from North Korea in 1976 accepted with equanimity that 'traitors' were killed in Korea in the 1950s and in Cambodia after 1975.

Like all the 'left' bourgeoisie, he had expected to occupy a privileged position in the revolutionary regime, and he was only shocked by

liquidations when he discovered that he himself fell into a category of political enemies. Another man, whose own brother, a pre-1975 acquaintance of mine, was executed, said, "it wasn't so bad that they killed people, that could be understood, but that they chose to use such cruel methods."12 It should also not be forgotten that not until 1972 did the Lon Nol government, under pressure from unfavorable media attention to their own atrocities, announce that Vietnamese prisoners would be treated according to international conventions.13

In spite of the slant of the foregoing stories, however, I do not believe that discussion of the 'Khmer personality' or Khmer psychology is very useful in an explanation of the DK phenomenon. As Stephen Heder, a student of the Cambodian revolution, has noted, anti-communist refugees tend "to understand the nature of and explain the atrocities of the Democratic Kampuchea regime in very clear class terms";14 and a search for such explanations in objective economic, social, and political circumstances is always preferable to nebulous psychologizing. It is important to realize, however, that Heder's informants analyzed the peasant class, who were their enemies, on the basis of their own subjective impressions of peasant culture and psychology. Furthermore, even if the genesis of a revolution is explained through a rigidly objective class analysis, the specific behavior of the victorious peasants or workers, or of other formerly oppressed people, will be determined, at least in part, by the old habits of their culture.

Thus Ebihara's informants, along with some Cambodians I have met, and in particular Bun Chan Mol, are invaluable as participant

observers who, beginning in the 1940s, saw as part of ‘Khmer mores’ some signs of what is now considered as Pol Pot extremism; and if the broad structure of post-1975 developments is amenable to explanation from objective circumstances and high-level policy decisions, the details owe something to those old ‘Khmer mores.’

Much of the foregoing has dealt with traditions of violence, but what about the famous Khmer Buddhism with its “precepts and practices [which] pervade the values and behavior of the populace who accept this religion sincerely and devoutly” and which was “the very apprenticeship of tolerance”?

Wasn’t it supposed to be the source and guarantee of the gentleness which all observers believed they saw in Cambodia and which gave “inner serenity and the habit of kindness toward all”?15 Were the Issaraks of the 1940s and the DK cadres of the 1970s not Buddhists? (At first their enemies, the French in the first instance and the Lon Nol government in the second, tried to claim they were not Khmer, but Vietnamese.) And since they must once have been Buddhist - i.e., they were Khmer and all Khmer are Buddhist - what accounts for their easy rejection of Buddhist mores for (more purely?) Khmer?

Probably more arrant nonsense has been written in the West about Buddhism than about any other aspect of Southeast Asian life. Like every other major religion, Buddhism as it is practiced in the countries where it has ancient roots is a concretion of certain admirable philosophical and moral principles with beliefs and

practices which date from pre-Buddhist times, prejudices peculiar to the society, special relationships with ruling classes, and the ability to rationalize the pursuit of material gain, as well as a good many other actions which are contrary to its principles. That Buddhists may torture and massacre is no more astonishing than that the Inquisition burned people or that practicing Catholics and Protestants joined the Nazi SS. Ebihara got very close to what Cambodian Buddhism really means:

“the villager himself rarely conceives of observing separate religious traditions [Buddhist, Hindu, folk]. Rather, for the ordinary Khmer, Buddha and ghosts, prayers at the temple and invocations to spirits, monks and mediums are all part of what is essentially a single religious system.” Instructive also was the religious vocation of an 18-year-old girl who said, "I think I will go to three or four Kathun festivals this year so that I will be reborn as a rich American."16

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One of the most important functions of Cambodian popular Buddhism is the opportunity it gives for making merit - by participating in certain festivals, by giving food to monks, or, for men, by becoming a monk oneself. The desire to make merit results from the Cambodian understanding of Buddhism as a fatalist doctrine which holds that our condition in the present life is the result of our

past conduct, while our conduct in this life, good or bad, will determine our fate in future existences.

Moreover, the opportunity of making merit was not the same for all, something which has hardly been touched on in the anthropological literature. Almost all forms of making merit depended on giving up some part of one's own economic surplus to, or for, the temple and monks. Cambodians did not believe that the poor man's mite equalled the rich man's gold. On the contrary, the more spent, the greater the merit accrued; and thus those who were already wealthy due to the supposed accumulation of merit in former existences had greater potential for accumulating further merit as insurance for the cosmic future.

Ebihara touches on this aspect of Cambodian Buddhism in her central Cambodian rice-village. She notes that about three-fourths of the men over age 17 had at some time been monks. But the poorest families could not always spare their young men from field work to become monks; and about 17 percent of all adult men fell into that category.17 These poorest peasants, then, were deprived by their poverty of the main merit-making and cosmic insurance function of their society's religion. We can surmise that some of them, at least, must have felt resentment, compounded perhaps by the fact that in traditional Cambodian society a period spent as a monk was essential to becoming a full adult with one's own wife and family.

One would expect a tendency on the part of such men to reject Buddhism, at least the idea of accepting fate, and in fact Ebihara

found, already by 1959, just such a tendency, not only among the poor, but among wealthier people as well. Modern life and secular education impelled them to work for the present and to lose interest in religion. In her village the number of men who had been monks was in inverse proportion to age, and in the 10-19-year group none had any plans to follow this old tradition.18 I found similar attitudes among my teacher colleagues in 1960-61. Of twenty or so teachers between the ages of 20 and 30, half a generation older than Ebihara's youngest group, only one had served his term as a monk, and most of the others openly ridiculed religious traditions, considering monks to be social parasites.

This last attitude, then, was not the exclusive property of Pol Pot fanatics, but already ten years before the war existed among peasants and middle-class youth, most of whom in 1975 found themselves on the wrong side. Even earlier, during the first Indochina war, certain anti-clerical tendencies which have since been associated with DK were already manifest.

French intelligence reports of June-July 1949 gave some attention to a band of rebels under one 'Achar Yi,' who operated in Kandal and Prey Veng.

They were apparently non-communist, since on one occasion they announced an intention to "massacre the local Vietnamese, whether Viet Minh or not," but they were also noted for burning the sacred scriptures in temples they suspected of following modernist tendencies.19

Thus chauvinism, linked to peasant traditionalism in a form which could countenance destruction of religious paraphernalia, already had roots in the Cambodian countryside. There was also an iconoclastic tendency among some non-revolutionary, law-abiding people, including monks. In 1971, visiting a monk I had known for some years in Battambang province, I remarked on the almost disrespectful way he seemed to regard Buddha images in his temple. He explained that the images were really only useless idols, unimportant to a real understanding and practice of religion. It is impossible to ascertain how widespread this monastic sub-culture was; and it may be only a coincidence that this man and all his relatives and acquaintances had been part of the early Issarak bands described by Bun Chan Mol in the northwestern districts noted for violence both in those days and under DK.20

For those who wished to reject their religion, for whatever reason, poverty or modernism, it was, however, better to be Buddhist than Christian, for the former contains a nice escape clause for the backslider. As Pin Yathay put it, "you are responsible for yourself; you are your own master … Buddha is not a god … only a guide. He shows you the way … it is for you to convince yourself that the way he indicates is good."21 Thus for those who rejected it there was no superior moral force to accuse or punish them. If in rejecting religion they also committed crimes, they would not be punished by a deity. They might risk cosmic demotion in a future life, but it was also possible to calculate that later good works could offset the bad on the cosmic balance sheet. Besides, the non-Buddhist folk practices

which were a part of every Cambodian's religious heritage provided many other sources of protection, both physical and spiritual.

In the face of the gradual disaffection from traditional Buddhism which Ebihara noticed, the Cambodian elite sought to reemphasize religion as a technique for repressing the new desires for social mobility. In 1955, when revolutionary forces were threatening, a newspaper representing Sihanouk's new coalition of the right maintained editorially that the country should be ruled by its natural leaders, who are the rich and powerful. The less fortunate should not envy them and try to take their places, for each person's situation in the present is determined by his past actions. The poor should accept their fate, live virtuously, and try to accumulate merit in order to improve their station in another existence.22

At the same time, and perhaps in an effort to counter the anti-monastic disaffection of the youth, there were attempts to associate the monks with nation-building. Thus in one of Sihanouk's glossy magazines a photograph of monks at work on a road or dike construction site was accompanied by the caption "monks within the framework of our Buddhist socialism participate in the work of nation-building."23 This of course prefigures the DK treatment of monks, and for traditionalists could have represented sacrilege.

Even violence could be linked with the practice of Buddhism if it was in defense of the established order upholding the official religion. One of Lon Nol's favorite themes, on which he composed a series of pamphlets, was "religious war' in which he tried to identify the

Vietnamese and Khmer communists with the thmil, the enemies of the true faith in old Buddhist folklore.24 Violence in the service of the true faith could be used to link Khmer Buddhists and Islamic Chams, the largest indigenous minority in Cambodia.

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During the first two years of the war a Cham colonel, Les Kasem, gained fame with a Cham battalion which was reported to have systematically destroyed and exterminated ‘Khmer Rouge’ villages which they occupied. Their notoriety was finally such that the government realized they were counterproductive and the battalion was split up among other units. Pro-religious violence is also attractive to some Christians, like Ponchaud, who proudly retails the story of a Cham father who murdered his sons for accepting Communist discipline.25

It is no wonder that poor peasant youth returned from short communist seminars full of anti-religious fervor.26 Cambodian Buddhism was desecrated, long before the DK regime closed the temples, by the blatant class manipulation of the faith under Sihanouk’s Sangkum, followed in Lon Nol’s Republic by the designation of temples as military recruitment stations.27

Long before the war the poorest had reason to feel some resentment against the religious structure, and the middle groups were losing interest for materialist reasons. For both, at bottom, the mixture of Buddhist principles, old Hindu rites, and ancient folk beliefs which together constituted Cambodian religion, represented techniques for ameliorating one's material life, either now or in the future. If the religion was seen to fail in that respect, disaffection occurred.

Such disaffection was massively apparent among the refugees in camps in Thailand, where in 1980 there were more registered Khmer Christians than in all of Cambodia before 1970. To accuse missionaries of manufacturing rice Christians misses the point. As one particularly sophisticated family whom I had known in Phnom Penh put it: "look at what happened to Cambodia under Buddhism; Buddhism has failed, and we must search for some other faith."28

Some fifty-odd years ago another such large-scale disaffection occurred.

Around 1927, at a time of economic and political difficulties, thousands of Cambodian peasants took an interest in the Cao-Dai religion - a faith of the 'hereditary enemy,' the Vietnamese - going to worship and participate in ceremonies at the Cao-Dai headquarters near Tay-Ninh.

At the very least this "reflected the reaction of a disoriented peasantry ready to turn to the newly offered salvation that they believed would involve the regeneration of the Cambodian state."29

Rejection of traditional religion and the proliferation of non-Buddhist violence are thus well within the Khmer cultural heritage, whether the specific manifestations are a temporary interest in Cao-Dai, Issarak savagery, modernist derision, or DK official atheism.30

If Buddhism proved to be no barrier to class antagonisms, or to violence, much in the country's social and economic structure tended to encourage both.31

Traditional Cambodian society was formed essentially of three classes - peasants, officials, and royalty. Very few Khmers became merchants, and to the extent that an urban population apart from the court and officials existed, it was composed mainly of non-Khmers, generally Chinese.

This division of society probably goes back to the Angkor period when national wealth was produced from the land and collected by officials, who channeled it to the court and religious apparatus where it was used largely for building the temples and supporting the specialized population attached to them. A part of the wealth collected by officials remained in their hands for their support in lieu of salary, but this was accepted as the way in which the system naturally functioned. Each of the classes had a function believed essential for the welfare of the society, and in which the king's role was quasi-religious and ritual.32

Although the Angkorean state declined and disappeared, the old divisions of society persisted. For the mass of the population, social position was fixed, and it would have been almost unthinkable to imagine rising above the class into which one was born. Occasionally, perhaps in time of war, or for exceptional services to a powerful patron, someone from a peasant background might rise into the official class and thereby change the status of his immediate family; and clever children might be educated in an official family or at court to become officials; but such occurred too rarely for any expectation of social mobility to be part of public consciousness.

The possibilities of wealth accumulation were also limited. Land was not personal property, but in theory belonged to the king. An energetic peasant could thus not accumulate land and wealth through hard work and abstemiousness and move up the scale to rich farmer, entrepreneur, or whatever. The only possibility for wealth accumulation lay in an official career.

Even there life was hazardous. Officials were of course more or less wealthy, and the official status of a family might continue for generations; but their status was not assured by any formal legality, and could be ended precipitously at royal displeasure - for instance, if an official showed signs of accumulating too much wealth or power. Even if a career did not end in disgrace, wealth accumulated in the form of gold, jewels, other precious goods, or dependents, might revert to the state at an official's death rather than passing in inheritance to his family. There was thus no incentive, or possibility,

to use wealth for long-term constructive purposes or entrepreneurial investment.

Village and family organization, especially if compared to China, Vietnam, or India, were extremely weak. Khmer villages were not cohesive units, as in Vietnam, dealing collectively with officials; and beyond the nuclear household, families easily disintegrated. Family names did not exist, records of previous generations were not kept, ancestors were not the object of a religious cult. Corporate discipline over the individual by extended families or by village organizations was weak, and once a person had fulfilled his obligations to the state - as a tax or corvee - there was little constraint in his activities. It is thus likely that a paradoxical situation of great anarchic individual freedom prevailed in a society in which there was no formal freedom at all.

The relations among royalty, officials, and peasantry, which did not begin to change under colonial impact until after 1884, were organized in forms of dependency. Everyone below the king had a fixed dependent status which served to determine his obligations to the next higher level and also provided protection. The provinces of the realm were given in appanage to the highest officials of the capital whose agents in the provinces collected the taxes and organized the corvee which were the raison d’etre for the system.

Each peasant in theory, and in the central agricultural provinces in reality, was the dependent client of an official whose identity he knew.

Besides such dependence at all levels of society within the country, the Cambodian ruling class had for centuries been dependent on foreign overlords and protectors, usually Siam and Vietnam, but at one point in the 1590s Europeans;33 and French protection against Vietnam was sought in the 19th century even before the French were ready to impose it.34

There was thus no serious conception of self-reliance at any level of Cambodian society, and in a crisis everyone looked to a powerful savior from above or outside rather than seeking a local solution.

Kings looked to ever more powerful protectors both against their neighbors and their own people, a practice which even Sihanouk did not give up, in spite of his rhetoric to the contrary. His ‘crusade for independence’ was imposed on him by challenges from the left, and the independence granted in 1953 was in a way Franco-Sihanouk collusion to block a Cambodian revolution. All through the formally anti-United States years of the 1960s he never renounced the desire for an American protective shield against the communist Vietnamese.35

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Lesser members of the elite acted in similar fashion. The protest of Prince Yukanthor against the French protectorate in 1901 is often treated as an anti-colonial manifestation, whereas in fact Yukanthor was berating the French for neglecting to provide adequate protection for the traditional elite against upstart commoners who were taking advantage of the expanding colonial bureaucracy to advance themselves economically and socially.36 At the lower levels of society peasants who felt oppressed would seek to change patrons, or if pushed to violence they turned to anarchic banditry which caused more suffering to their fellows than to the oppressive officials.

In contrast to the Chinese or Vietnamese mass peasant rebellions which occasionally took state power and started a new dynastic cycle,37 no peasant or other lower class rebellion in Cambodia before the 1970s ever snowballed into a movement which endangered the system. This was no doubt in part due to the individual anarchy resulting from lack of corporate units above the family. The potential rebel wished to be bought off, not change the system.

This is seen in the circumstance of the first stirrings of modern nationalist rebellion against the French, and contrasts with the earlier and more thoroughgoing organization in Vietnam. Soon after the murder of the only French official killed in the 20th century by ethnic Khmers while carrying out his official duties, the guilty villagers “returned, ashamed, to the village, and before long were turning one another in to the police”;38 and in the 1940s at the French political

prison on Pulou Condore, the trusties, police spies, and torturers were all Khmers currying favor for individual special treatment, while the Vietnamese maintained a spirit of political solidarity and organized classes in Marxism.39

The same client mentality persisted right on into the 1970s, at least among one part of the population. Not only did Lon Nol and his coterie rely on foreign protection, but so did all those outside the revolutionary camp who saw the hopelessness of the government position. When it was clear by 1972 that a Lon Nol government could not win, those generals and civilian officials who might have retrieved the situation, instead of simply taking power, kept hoping vainly for the Americans to act in their favor. I suppose every American in Phnom Penh at the time shared my experience of friends and acquaintances asking in desperation, “why doesn’t the CIA do something?”

In the end their dependency led them to acquiesce in, or even encourage, the devastation of their own country by one of the worst aggressive onslaughts in modern warfare, and therefore to appear as traitors to a victorious peasant army which had broken with old patron-client relationships and had been self-consciously organized and indoctrinated for individual, group, and national self-reliance,40

If the traditional system seems in retrospect oppressive, we must remember that before the 20th century Cambodians, like most Asians, knew no other, and that the demand for wealth by the elites

was generally limited to what could be consumed or spent within the country.

Although much of the formal system was changed by the French, there was not a corresponding change in attitudes and values. Officials continued to see their positions as ends in themselves, as situations in which to accumulate, for consumption, part of the wealth extracted from the peasantry and passed upward to the rulers. After they were put on salary by the French, such additional accumulation was illegal, but as a traditional practice it was not felt to be immoral, and the corruption which later became such a serious problem began thus as a continuation of an accepted traditional practice.

The exploitative character of colonialism thus merged easily with the exploitative character of traditional society, and intensified it; and for many of the Cambodian elites the evil of colonialism probably resided less in its exploitative character than in the fact that they were not in ultimate control.

I do not intend to argue that the Cambodian revolution was caused just by economic pressure on the peasantry. That would be incorrect. If it had not been first for the revolutionary movement in Vietnam and then for foreign military intervention with its attendant destruction, Cambodia might well have gone on for years with a level of insurgency too strong for the government to suppress, but not strong enough to take over state power.41

It is nevertheless important to stress that exploitation of the peasantry was increasing throughout the 20th century and if it alone did not push them to revolution it was responsible for serious rural-urban antagonisms. Taxes were increased by the French, particularly after World War I, and were the highest in Indochina, with part of the funds funnelled elsewhere in the federation rather than used in Cambodia. In particular, taxation was “heavy in terms of any benefits … returning to the peasant”; and the murder of a French official in 1925 was due to his attempt to collect taxes in arrears.

There were also onerous corvees for public works, first of all roads; and in one infamous project, the construction of a resort at Bokor, 900 workers’ lives were lost in nine months, a statistic comparable to the human cost of a Pol Pot dam site.42

French efforts to reimpose their protectorate regime after a brief period of Japanese-sponsored ‘independence’ in 1945 led to a multiplicity of guerilla operations by Issaraks representing all shades of the political spectrum, and in general directed against the French and the royal government of Prince Sihanouk. The years 1946-52 were increasingly violent, with the rebel forces eventually controlling large areas.43 Independence in 1953 did not bring long-lasting relief either, even though taxes were not collected as energetically as before.

Cambodia has been pictured as a lush food-surplus region, but its soil is generally too poor and natural water supply inadequate for optimum production of its main crop, rice. Cambodian rice yields

have always been among the world's lowest, and after World War II increasing demands for export rice, which in effect were used to finance an increasingly luxurious urban lifestyle, began to squeeze the nearly constant supply which also had to feed a rapidly growing population.

Statistics are poor, and it was always possible to claim that most peasants owned their own land; at least landlordism and large estates were not the main problems of the Cambodian peasantry. The technique which insured that they continue to supply the market, whether or not it provided them much in return, was a never-ending cycle of debt with usurious interest, the collection of which was ultimately backed up by police power.44 Such pressure to squeeze ever more rice out of a resistant peasantry was one of the elements in the first really revolutionary revolts in 1967-68.45

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Some examples of peasant conditions in one of the central agricultural areas close to Phnom Penh are instructive with respect to what happened after 1975. In the village of West Svay one-third of the households owned land but had no oxen, or only one ox, and they resorted to various cooperative arrangements to get their plowing done. Cooperation was also necessary to secure a water supply, since rainfall was often inadequate, or at the wrong time; and the

primitive irrigation techniques for moving water from one field to another required permission of all the owners, and resulted in frequent quarrels.46

When plowing and harrowing were performed cooperatively, the owner of the field being worked provided a small meal and cigarettes. Such meals had traditionally included rice gruel, soup, and various side dishes; but by 1959 "the villagers of West Svay had agreed among themselves that only rice gruel and dried fish need be provided … because the cost of additional food was too great an expense for many families."47 Thus for Cambodian peasants in that area the conditions of existence imposed cooperative labor, but made outbursts of inter-family violence inevitable, and at certain times of the year forced them to accept a diet which since 1975 has become a symbol of communist oppression in Democratic Kampuchea.

Continuing in an historical vein, it is instructive to note that the forced exodus of urban people in April 1975 was not the first such disruption in Cambodia; it was only the first which involved the comfortable classes of the towns. If the population of Phnom Penh, as estimated, increased from around 600,000 in 1970 to over 2 million by 1975, at least half the increase, and a larger number of people than the entire urban population of 1970, consisted of peasants driven from their land by bombing and shelling. It is a strange kind of history which regards that displacement of people as somehow less abhorrent or more ‘normal’ than the reverse movement of 1975.

Further back in Cambodian history, but not so far that it would not have been remembered by still living people, between several hundred thousand and perhaps one million rural inhabitants, mostly in the provinces of Takeo, Svay Rieng, and Kompong Chhnang, and representing from one-eighth to one-quarter of the total population, were forcibly ‘regrouped’ during the first Indochina war of 1946-54.48

Furthermore, if the latest war and revolution had not interrupted it, another forced exodus of from half to three-quarters of a million peasants was being projected and viewed with equanimity by the Cambodian administrative elite and their international advisers. That was the estimated number of people whose villages would have been flooded out of existence in northeastern Cambodia and southern Laos by Mekong Project dams which would have provided few alternative benefits for them, or even for Cambodia as a whole.49

Thus for the rural 80-90 percent of the Cambodian people arbitrary justice, sudden violent death, political oppression, exploitative use of religion and anti-religious reaction, both violent and quiescent, were common facts of life long before the war and revolution of the 1970s. The creations of Pol Pot-ism were all there in embryo.

When they emerged fully grown after 1975 they were directed first of all at the urban population which, to the extent it had been at all involved in the earlier violence described above, had always been associated with the apparatus dealing it out. Some degree of

resentment, even hatred, of the towns should have been expected. In his most recent, anti-DK, avatar Wilfred Burchett has alluded to this. Under Pol Pot, he wrote, "it sufficed to turn up the palm of the hand - roughened it saved - if not it was death."50

I would not argue about that measure having occasionally been used in 1975 to distinguish urban evacuees, even though in most cases they were easy to recognize without looking at their hands and, as the following chapters will show, there was never a campaign to identify and dispose of urban folk in general. What I found interesting about Burchett's remark was that I had heard the same story in 1962 from a friend, an urban school teacher, who ten years earlier had been on a bus stopped by Issaraks ostensibly fighting for Cambodian independence from France. They entered the bus by the front and passed down the aisle turning up hands. If they were soft the passengers were led away. My friend, fortunately, was sitting toward the rear and government security forces arrived on the scene before his turn came.51

Who were these urban folk whose soft hands might have put their lives in jeopardy a generation before anyone had heard of Pol Pot? Before 1945 there was scarcely a Khmer urban population at all.

Phnom Penh (pop. 111,000 in 1948)52 and the provincial towns were primarily Chinese trading and commercial centers with smaller but important groups of Vietnamese traders and artisans, all overlaid at the highest levels by a French administration and business network along with the 'protected' royal Cambodian government in the capital

and a Khmer administrative skeleton at provincial and lower levels. As commerce was solidly in foreign or non-Khmer hands, upward mobility for Khmers required entering the administration, and this was only possible in times of bureaucratic expansion when not all the positions open to Khmers could be filled by younger members of the traditional elite. A rough indication of the possibilities offered by the administration as a channel of upward mobility can be seen in a comparison of the estimates of government administrative personnel in 1940 (13,000) and 1967 (93,800), a seven-fold expansion in a period in which total population had not quite doubled.33 Probably the main increase within that period was in 1953, after independence, and 1954, after the end of the Indochina War and total French withdrawal.

Another index of the growth of a Khmer urban elite, and its problems, is the expansion of education. Admittedly this was an area of colonial neglect.

The first local high school diplomas, the French baccalaureat, were received by seven students, all of whom went on to prominent positions, in 1931; and in 1936 there were only 50-60,000 children in primary school. By 1954 there were 271,000 in primary schools, 3,300 in secondary schools, and 144 students had received the full baccalaureat.54

Thereafter, the numbers increased rapidly until 1970. Primary enrollment expanded to a million, secondary to over 100,000, and tertiary from 350 to 10,000. The percentage increase in university

students alone was many times the percentage increase in the total population.

To what extent did this increase meet the needs of the country? Education had certainly been neglected, and after independence some degree of rapid development was desirable and laudable. The attitude of Cambodians, however, seemed to be that the maximum amount of modern education in any field at all for the maximum number of children was an absolute good in itself, without ever taking into account the absorptive capacities of the society. In contrast, the colonial authorities, as well as independent Thailand, had tried to limit educational opportunities in order not to create an unemployable class of semi-intellectuals.

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Not only was the rate of educational expansion much greater than the rate of increase in population, which represented in part a catching up, but it also exceeded the capacity of government, commerce or industry to utilize the graduates. High school education, that of the traditional French lycee with some Khmer-language admixture, provided a general arts education of little practical value, perhaps “suitable for the children of the French bourgeoisie of the belle epoque (and no longer suitable for children in France today) [but] not adapted to the needs of Cambodia.”

University students were also enrolled overwhelmingly in the arts courses which did not prepare students for much more than the career of government functionary.55 The technical university founded in 1964 had yearly enrollment between 1,300 and 1,700, which might have represented just about what was needed, depending on the specific career orientation followed; but in a field such as agronomy where Cambodia needed specialists, there were only 117 students in 1970-71.56

A majority of arts graduates from the lycees and universities in the first few years could find careers as teachers in the rapidly growing number of primary and secondary schools. By the late 1960s the number of primary and secondary school teachers had stabilized at around 20,000, most of whom had probably come from among the nearly same number who had received licenses, baccalaureats, and lower secondary diplomas during the preceding decade.

For the remaining graduates and the five times greater number who had completed the courses of study only to fail the exams, government service was almost the only outlet. It would have been unthinkable for anyone with a high school or even lower secondary education, with or without a diploma, to go back to peasant life. The bureaucracy, however, was not indefinitely expandable, and even with the overloading of offices to take as many as possible, Sihanouk, by 1961, had to announce that the administration was full and couid not possibly accommodate the 600,000 or so students then in school.57 He advised them to go back to the farm, but by then it was too late. His Sangkum had already awakened aspirations which could not

suddenly be cut off, and even though dependence of the urban upper and middle classes on the state had been traditional, there had never before been such opportunities for mobility into that sector by people from less privileged groups.

Neither were there expanding commercial and industrial sectors to absorb the newly educated. Commerce was still mainly in the hands of Chinese, Vietnamese, and a few Khmer families who had always been dominant.

Their children also went through the new schools and then returned to fill the empty places in that sector. Industry was virtually non-existent, a feeble internal market made development difficult, and what did develop could not make much special use of lycee graduates or people with university degrees in French or Khmer literature. At the top it needed engineers and technicians, and at the bottom barely literate (or even illiterate) workers with 2-3 years of primary education and direct from the village. The educational system was thus producing an increasingly numerous class of useless people.

Moreover, the class structure .of Cambodian society meant that even usefully educated people might be denied suitable employment. In March 1972 Captain Chan of the Khmer Republic army told me that after having obtained a degree in agriculture from an American university he returned home hoping to work in a government agricultural service, but in spite of a recommendation from Sihanouk he was turned down because “the department is controlled by the

bourgeoisie and I am not one of them and could not pay a bribe to get a job." He then joined the army as a private, before March 1970, and was given a commission after the war started.

Education in Cambodia, as in much of the Third World, did not develop as in the West or in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe after World War II where, beginning in the 19th century, education at all levels developed to supply skills needed in industrial societies.

In Cambodia education grew as a demand for status and wealth by people who believed they had been unjustly deprived. The demand was first by Cambodians collectively against the French, and then by lower class Cambodians as a channel to escape peasant life and join what they perceived as the wealthier, easier life in the towns.58

Even if Sihanouk and his advisers perceived the dilemma in the beginning, political reasons would have prevented them from limiting education or trying to turn it into more useful channels. Precarious as their rule was,59 they could not run the risk of accusations from their opponents that they were keeping people ignorant as the French had done.

Education, then, at least beyond lower primary, represented first of all a status, both socially and, where jobs were available, economically. It was not in order to acquire useful training, not even primarily to make money through the exercise of skills much in demand, but to obtain a piece of paper attesting the acquisition of a status through which, normally, one should have been able to enter a service where

salaries and perks would provide a comfortable life and the prerogative of commanding people of lower status.

Thus the stories, partly apocryphal but based on observed circumstances, of Cambodians who would complete honorable university courses, then armed with their diplomas, sell off their books or at least never look at them again.

Cambodia had not been and did not become a reading nation; and there was always a certain implicit denigration of learning and of intellectuals by the established elite. In fact, by the 1960s 'intellectual,' when used publicly by Sihanouk, was very nearly a term of opprobrium.

The holders of status positions, the bureaucrats, including teachers, received salaries which were princely in comparison with the money income of a peasant, artisan, or factory worker, or even in comparison with the income from a similar position in Thailand. In 1960-62, for example, a teacher at lower secondary level had a salary equivalent to about US$100 per month at the official rate of exchange while his counterpart in Thailand was receiving about $30. This was because in Cambodia, as in many former colonies, the first post-independence salaries were set to show some relationship to the colonial (European) salaries for the same positions, whereas in Thailand salaries were initially set on the basis of local living standards and class hierarchies.

Therefore bureaucrats, teachers, and even the unemployed with some education had a privileged status, were jealous of their position and presumed prerogatives and, particularly since so many of them had recently escaped from the village, were contemptuous of peasant life and determined to remain in an urban milieu. Often boys with no more than primary schooling considered themselves intellectuals; and the resulting diploma snobbery extended into unexpected quarters. In 1971 the FUNK Bulletin in Paris criticized the Phnom Penh General In Tam as “personifying illiteracy in all areas,” and said of another office, Hou Hang Sin, that he was "incapable of preparing a report without spelling errors."60 The editors, supporters of the revolution, little realized that within a few years they themselves might face hard labor or even death for intellectual snobbery, or at the very least would be serving under men whose level of formal education was far below that of In Tam.

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Another illustrative case is the young university graduate who left Cambodia in 1973 and who in 1979 had an opportunity to meet and criticize Thiounn Mum, a DK senior official who graduated from France’s Ecole Polytechnique. Among other things she upbraided him for agreeing to work under Pol Pot, "who has no university degree at all."61 She was also contemptuous of DK efforts, defended by Mum, to shorten certain courses of education, such as basic medicine and

technical training, and appeared shocked when I pointed out that western medical teams in the refugee camps were having success with similar programs, teaching people to perform in a few weeks or months tasks which in traditional schools might take years. Because of its implicit attack on the status function of education, the notion of abridging traditional educational programs, turning peasants into paramedics or basic mechanics, or producing 'barefoot' doctors, is even more shocking to non-peasant Cambodians than to bourgeois westerners. It was noticeable in KID that some of the emergency programs considered desirable or necessary by the international aid organizations were disliked by the refugees as being uncomfortably similar to what had been implemented in Democratic Kampuchea.

By the early 1960s it was already apparent that Cambodian towns were filling up with people who through education had acquired new status but who could not be put to use in the existing system, and urban economic sectors were not being expanded to receive them (aside from the fact that their education was nearly useless for those sectors). The expansion of the school system itself had been the last surge of bureaucratic growth, and was carried to its absurd extreme by the proliferation of universities after 1964. The latter gave a few more years 'employment' to several thousand 'intellectuals,' both as students and teachers, but in the process created even more educated unemployables.62 At the same time, as noted above, the demands made on the country's economy, that is on the peasantry, by the towns were steadily increasing.

In traditional Cambodia, before the French protectorate, people of status were rewarded, not with salaries, but by a cut of the fees, taxes, or products they collected for the crown, and with the privilege of using people of lower status for personal services or as direct producers of items of consumption. Although that system was formally ended nearly 100 years ago, the mentality which accompanied it persisted, and all state employment, which meant almost all employment open to Khmers outside the villages, was still ranked on a scale of desirability according to the opportunity it provided for private benefits, now termed graft. Even when whole industries were set up as foreign aid projects, as was done by China in the 1960s, such industries were valued mainly for the possibilities of personal enrichment inherent in them. The Cambodians had discovered that even 'socialism' could be integrated into their traditions. The value of the term in modern international relations was apparent by the 1950s,63 and for foreign consumption the name of Sihanouk's new political party was rendered as 'Popular Socialist Community.' Of course, it was not to be Marxist socialism, but rather a Royalist-Buddhist Socialism, without class conflict - declared inexistent in Cambodia - and depending on the 'ancient' Cambodian practice of the sovereign providing for the welfare of his people.64

And since the sovereign by definition always provided for the people's welfare, any kind of criticism was seen as subversive or anti-monarchical.

Under Royalist-Buddhist Socialism the state industries and nationalized enterprises after 1964 became in effect appanages for

Sihanouk's favorites, who grew wealthy while the account books showed red.65 Periodic scandals served to spread the wealth around, placing some in temporary eclipse while others took their turn at the trough. It was a continuation of the traditional practice of officials extracting a percentage of what they collected for the state; and no one of the elite was ever severely called to account or forced to repay what he had collected from the public till.66

Before the modern world impinged on Cambodian life the old system could work passably well. The wealth squeezed out of the peasantry by the officials and the court - the state apparatus - did not in general represent a loss to the national economy, for little of it was spent abroad. It would be redistributed through conspicuous consumption within the economy in the construction of temples and dwellings, the support of large service retinues which every wealthy and powerful figure collected, and the patronage of local artisans. Much of it was returned whence it came, and the propensity to accumulate wealth by the elites must have been limited by the limits of consumption, or use, within the country.

In mid-20th century, however, such a system was much more fragile and more oppressive. Conspicuous consumption indulged in by the elite was no longer within the economy, but involved the acquisition of expensive foreign products, frequent trips abroad, hard currency bank accounts, and the construction of amenities modeled on those of Paris and New York; and the large dependent clienteles through which wealth was once redistributed were no longer needed or desired. Development, for such a consumption-oriented elite, meant

luxury housing, western-style restaurants and bars, importation of automobiles. The type of growth experience of Saigon and Bangkok in the 1960s and 1970s, ending for the former in 1975, and which most westerners would consider tragic, was regarded by Cambodians with envy; and those who opposed Sihanouk's rejection of American aid in 1963-64 argued that such growth would thereby be impeded in Phnom Penh.

The upper strata among whom such new habits began set the tone for all those below. The elite had been to France, and often to other countries as well, had investments abroad, and considered that emulation of the lifestyle of wealthy Paris or New York was no more than their due. To this end, Phnom Penh was to be turned into a city with all the western refinements, and luxuries were to be freely imported. On the one hand this made Phnom Penh one of the most attractive cities in the world, and on the other led to such absurdities as the "concours d'élégance automobile" sponsored by Sihanouk.67 -The beautiful city, though, had to be filled with private villas which few could legitimately afford and all the luxuries to go with them.

From the highest levels the demonstration effect spread downward until everyone aspired to luxuries which neither the individual, nor the society as a whole, could afford, and the result was a generalized corruption and a draining of wealth into unproductive investments.

Among the impressionable recipients of the demonstration effect were all the superfluous young semi-intellectuals who flocked to the towns, particularly Phnom Penh. With the administration virtually

closed to further expansion since 1961, only a rapidly expanding economy could have made room for them at the level they desired. But Cambodia, after 1963, went into a recession. Rice production declined, and along with it the industries related to rice, such as milling, transportation, commerce, and alcohol. Construction and mechanical industries also probably declined, and in any case did not expand.68

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The only employment for immigrants to the city was in the personal service sector. Many of them found a place as clients, hangers-on, and quasi-servants of the rich, thus perpetuating an old Cambodian tradition. Others were absorbed in the hotels, restaurants, bars, tailor and dressmaker shops, barber and hairdresser trades which constituted a sector seemingly unaffected by recession or austerity. (The contradiction here is not logical, but in the system itself. While productive activities stagnated, wealth, as in the case of state industries noted above, was being drained off into economic back channels and spent on frivolous consumption.) When the war began and the foreign aid and diplomatic community began a new expansion, there were new jobs as interpreters, secretaries, house-servants, drivers, gardeners, guards, etc.

Thus Cambodia's urban population, and in particular that of Phnom Penh, expanded. Already in 1968 greater Phnom Penh held nearly 10 percent of the country's total population, and together with the other towns over 12 percent, while urban and semi-urban (non-peasant) people were 21 percent.69

Although these percentages may not seem high in comparison with many other countries, it must be remembered that the move from country to town which is considered a part of normal development means movement into industries producing goods both for the city and for a developing countryside. In Cambodia, however, industry, which had never been important, was declining as urban population expanded; and far from providing equipment for agriculture, the urban sector was intent on squeezing more and more wealth out of it. Among the 880,000 who constituted the true urban population, or 112 million who made up the urban plus semi-urban group, there were only about 110,000 industrial employees, many of them outside Phnom Penh, 93,000 in the administration, 48,000 in transportation, 13,000 in construction - the most important. productive urban branch; but 60,000 in 'personal service' and 64,500 monks.70

This situation was congruent with and exacerbated by traditional views about status. Respectable employment, for an ordinary person, had traditionally meant life as a formally free peasant, or artisan, or state functionary, or member of the entourage or domestic staff of someone of high status. Wage labor was somehow degrading, while service employment was not; and there was no value-neutral, or even non-pejorative, term for "work for."

Urban-rural distinctions increased, and became more invidious against the peasants, as the city became wealthier and more westernized. Ultimately city folk began to regard peasants, not just as people who were poorer and less refined, but, because of the agricultural slack season, as people who did not work enough.71

Already before the war then, there were several hundred thousand, perhaps nearly a million Cambodians who had escaped from peasant and village life, and many more who wished to, and they were to a large extent oriented toward a foreign ideal. Before the late 1960s there was a strong French element in even primary education and many French teachers in the high schools. Beginning with school books, and continuing on through the press, popular literature, and films, all Cambodians who shared in the least in the urban culture were made aware of the attractions of western life, in particular the life of the comfortable bourgeoisie. As it became increasingly clear that few of those who aspired to them would ever acquire those western trappings in Cambodia, and as the country declined economically before 1970 and deteriorated physically afterward, the prosperous West became a golden paradise to which all wished to go. This was a goal which few of them could attain, however, and as second best, reverting to old patterns in their culture, they saw salvation in dependency on a strong western country, preferably the United States.

The war exacerbated the trend toward urban immigration and rural-urban contradictions; and the war itself, whatever else it may

have been, was also a war between town and country in which the towns fought increasingly to preserve privileges while the rural areas suffered. Although adequate statistics are unavailable, no one of any faction involved in the war has tried to deny that there were from half a million to a million war deaths, figures which compare with the more serious estimates - several hundred thousand to over a million - of abnormal deaths between 1975 and 1979.

Moreover, the rural half of the country, in 1970-75, suffered far more human and material damage than the urban.72 Again, no precise statistics are available, but impressionistic evidence is more than sufficient. The bombing and shelling of the countryside, particularly in 1972-73, and its attendant loss of life, are well known. Besides this, the rank and file of the Lon Nol forces, in contrast to the almost entirely urban officer corps, were country boys who from 1972 at least often found the army, even as corrupt as it was, the only way to an assured rice ration.

The real urban population suffered hardly at all from war wounds or violent death; and the only section of them directly exposed to war were the officers, among whom casualties, as everywhere, were much lower than among the soldiery.

The existing class distinctions of Cambodian society were maintained and exaggerated in the military, particularly during the war. Officers came back from the front daily to wine and dine in Phnom Penh restaurants, paying their bills, if at all, with money extorted by the device of phantom troops or by withholding soldiers'

allowances. As the city's productive function shrank during the war, much of its economy came to depend on such expenditure, financed ultimately by U.S. aid, and the military became a sort of mercenary force within their own country. An illustration of this class at its worst was the widow of a colonel in the Khao I Dang refugee center in 1980 who complained of living conditions there, saying that in the good old days before 1975 her husband's orderly used to bring her bags of money twice daily. The person to whom she addressed her complaint, another refugee, retorted that it was because of people like her that they were all sitting uncomfortably in a refugee camp.

Among all the urbanites whom I had known from 1960 onward, by 1975 I had only heard of one personal acquaintance killed in action and one other case of a friend's brother who had been killed. A French friend with an even longer residence in Cambodia had similar experience. Only two of his acquaintances had died as a result of the war. Of course, it is possible that some of our earlier acquaintances from the 1960s had joined the Communists or remained in the countryside and been killed there, but that would only go to prove my point.73

The city, or at least its poorer strata, and indeed anyone trying to live honestly on a government salary, did begin to suffer from hunger at least by 1972 - first because of inflation and then outright lack of food; but anyone who would argue that it was thereby disadvantaged with respect to rural areas would then have to admit that the Communists, in spite of war losses and damages, were carrying out a very successful organization of agricultural production.

Although certain journalistic accounts vividly described the shelling of Phnom Penh, particularly during the last year of the war, those incidents, bad as they were for their victims, cannot compare with the artillery and air attacks on the countryside, some of which as early as 1971 were clearly visible just across the river from Phnom Penh where they served as an amusing fireworks display for city people on an afternoon promenade or sipping drinks on their balconies.

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These were the people - spoiled, pretentious, contentious, status-conscious at worst, or at best simply soft, intriguing, addicted to city comforts and despising peasant life - who faced the communist exodus order on 17 April 1975.74 For them the mere fact of leaving an urban existence with its foreign orientation and unrealistic expectations to return to the land would have been a horror, and a horror compounded by their position on the receiving end of orders issued by illiterate peasants. On the whole they cared little or nothing for the problems of the ‘other half’ of their countrymen, and would have been quite content to have all the rural rebels bombed away by American planes. Even having seen the damage done to the country during the war they seem to exclude it from their thoughts, almost never mention it unless asked, and then

seem astonished that anyone would take interest in what happened in the rural areas before they arrived there in 1975.

These are the people who, by the nature of the circumstances, have been the main object of study for most post-1975 research on contemporary Cambodia, and also until late 1980 the main source of information about conditions inside the country. Even without conscious misinformation or exaggeration their portrayal of those five years could not help but be very one-sided; and the straight reporting of what they wish to say will inevitably give a distorted, sometimes even false, picture, of little use in understanding the revolutionary regime or for situating it properly within wider contemporary history. The bias in their stories would already be serious enough if they were again working at their old occupations, or some other useful task, in post-DK Cambodia; but it has been compounded by the frustrations and tensions of life in the refugee camps, and treated with insufficient perspicacity by many investigators, subjects to which we shall now turn.75

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### FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 1

1. This refers to the evacuation of Cambodian towns after the end of the war on April 17, 1975. Banteay Chhmar is near the Thai border in north-western Cambodia, in Damban 5 of Democratic Kampuchea's (DK) administration.

2. 'Issarak' ("free") is a term taken by various groups of anti-French and anti-royalist freedom fighters in 1946-54. For details see Ben Kiernan, "Origins of Khmer Communism," Southeast Asian Affairs 1981. Cited further as Kiernan, "Origins."

3. Khao I Dang, 40 km north of Aranyaprathet on the Thai-Cambodian border, was the largest refugee center for Khmers in 1979-81. See below, pp. 94-96, for the informant. Khao I Dang will be abbreviated below as 'KID."

4. This ceremony resembles that performed in earlier times in official human sacrifices. See David Chandler, "Royally Sponsored Human Sacrifices in Nineteenth Century Cambodia: the Cult of nak ta Me Sa (Mahisasuramardini) at Ba Phnom," Journal of the Siam Society 62, 2 (1974), pp. 207-222.

5. His group was active in Battambang province in the Northwest.

6. Bun Chan Mol, Charit Khmer ("Khmer Mores") (Phnom Penh, 1973), pp. 46-47, 49 ff.

7. Interviews with former Thanhists in Phnom Penh 1971-72; French report originally in Bulletin Quotidien de Renseignements (Spéciale),

Ministere de l'Intérieur, Phnom Penh, September 25, 1952, discovered by Ben Kiernan in August 1981 in the archives of the National Library in Phnom Penh. On Son Ngoc Thanh see further below, chapter 5, pp. 254-55.

8. May Mayko Ebihara, "Svay, a Khmer Village in Cambodia," Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1968, p. 542. This is one of the very few village ethnographic studies undertaken in Cambodia before the war of 1970-75.

9. On 'bandit charisma' in Southeast Asia see Charles F. Keyes, The Golden Peninsula: Culture and Adaptation in Southeast Asia (New York: Macmillan, 1977), p. 154.

10. David P. Chandler, "Cambodia Before the French," Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 1973, p. 106.

11. Dap Chhuon was an Issarak who joined Sihanouk's government in 1949, becoming governor of Siemreap Province and at times a Cabinet Minister. In 1959 he was allegedly planning to revolt and was killed by troops under the orders of Lon Nol. See Kiernan, "Origins."

12. Interview at Khao I Dang, July 1980. See below, p. 103, for further information which he provided.

13. This was announced on Phnom Penh radio March 29, 1972 and noted by myself at the time. The prisoners concerned were called "North Vietnamese-Viet Cong."

14. Stephen R. Heder, Kampuchean Occupation and Resistance. Cited further as Heder, "Occupation."

15. Ebihara, pp. 68-69; Pin Yathay, L'Utopie Meurtrière, p. 38; John Barron and Anthony Paul, Murder of a Gentle Land, p. 33. On Yathay see further below, pp. 88-89; and on Barron and Paul, pp. 43-45.

16. Ebihara, pp. 364, 383. Kathun: presentation of new robes to monks.

17. Ibid., pp. 91, 415-416.

18. Ibid., pp. 419-420.

19. French reports in the collection cited in note 7, above: Governor of Prey Veng and Governor of Kandal to Minister of the Interior, July 19, 1949 and June 3, 1949, respectively.

20. For the northwest under DK see below, pp. 100-120.

21. Yathay, 38.

22. Sangkum Reastr Niyum 1, June 17, 1955 and 2, June 24, 1955.

23. Le Sangkum (Phnom Penh) 1 (August 1965), p. 22.

24. The pamphlets were entitled in Khmer Chombang sasna, Phnom Penh, 1970. 'Thmil' is from 'Tamil,' and the stereotype goes back to the ancient struggles between Hindu Tamils and Sinhalese Buddhists in Ceylon.

25. Francois Ponchaud, Cambodia Year Zero (Penguin Edition), p. 153.

26. Kenneth M. Quinn, "Political Change in Wartime: the Khmer Kraham Revolution in Southern Cambodia, 1970-74," pp. 12-13.

27. See note 22 above and accompanying text. The use of temples as military recruitment centers was observed in 1971-72.

28. Interviews in Khao I Dang, July-August 1980.

29. Milton Osborne, "Peasant Politics in Cambodia: The 1916 Affair," Modern Asian Studies 12, 2 (1978), p. 242.

30. A few DK cadres, at least, did not see rejection of Buddhism for Communism as a turn to 'atheism.' See further below, pp. 180-181.

31. Much of the following paragraphs has appeared in Serge Thion and Michael Vickery, "Cambodia Background and Issues," Phnom Penh, 1981, printed and distributed by Church World Services.

32. Angkor, and other early Southeast Asian polities such as Pagan in Burma, are nearly perfect examples of the Marxist category of 'Asiatic Mode of Production.' See further chapter 5 below.

33. Bernard Philippe Groslier, Angkor et le Cambodge au X Vle siècle (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958).

34. Georges Taboulet, La geste francaise en Indochine (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1955); The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era, the Fourth Reign I, trans. by Chadin (Kanjanavit) Flood (Tokyo: Center for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1968-74), pp. 167-171.

35. Expressed in, for example, interviews with Francois Mennelet of Le Figaro and Jean Lacouture on June 24, 1964. Also "Declaration à la Presse Diplomatique," Paris, June 3, 1964, in Les Paroles de Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk, juillet-septembre, Phnom Penh.

36. Jean Hess, L'Affaire Iukanthor.(1901). The new elite family whom Yukanthor found most offensive was the Thiounns, four of whom in the present generation, the brothers Thiounn Mum, Prasith, Thioeun and Chhum, are high-level DK officials; see below, pp. 122, 148, 165.

37. For example, in Vietnam, the Tay-So'n rebellion and dynasty, 1773-90; and in China the Ming dynasty both began and ended in peasant and other lower-class revolts, with its first emperor originating in that milieu. Some details on Khmer banditry in the 20th century are in Ben Kiernan's dissertation, "How Pol Pot Came to

Power: A History of Communism in Kampuchea, 1930-1975," Monash University, 1983.

38. David Chandler, "The Assassination of Resident Bardez."

39. Bun Chan Mol, Kuk Niyobay ("Political Prison") (Phnom Penh, 1971).

40. The dependency culture may have been a factor in refugees' rejection of Buddhism in favor of Christianity, noted above. The latter provides an outside source of aid and salvation, and obviates the need to rely on oneself as in strict Buddhism or Pol Pot-ism.

41. That has been the situation in Burma, which from the 1940s was faced with problems similar to those of Indochina, but avoided large-scale destruction by refusing to allow the domestic conflicts to become internationalized. One advantage was that the colonial power in Burma did not try to reconquer the country after World War II.

42. Chandler, "The Assassination of Resident Bardez." After World War II, even before independence, it became very difficult to force taxes from the peasants, as related by Nhiek Tioulong, Minister of Finance in 1951, to David Chandler in August 1981. The construction of dams and irrigation canals was perhaps the most important corvee task in Democratic Kampuchea, and in a case comparable to Bokor, the construction of a dam in Pursat during the entire year 1977, 600 deaths are said to have occurred (Marie Alexandrine

Martin, "La riziculture et la maîtrise de l'eau dans le Kampuchea démocratique," pp. 27-28).

43. By 1952 between one-half and two-thirds of rural Cambodia was outside the control of the central government. This is apparent from a set of maps prepared by the French forces in Cambodia and now preserved in the National Library, Phnom Penh, where they were discovered in August 1981 by David Chandler. Further details appear in the dissertation by Ben Kiernan cited above, note 37.

44. The importance of usury has been noted by W. E. Willmott, "Analytical Errors of the Kampuchean Communist Party," Pacific Affairs, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Summer 1981), pp. 216, 219-220.

45. Ben Kiernan, "The Samlaut Rebellion and its Aftermath, 1967-70: The Origins of Cambodia's Liberation Movement," Parts I and II, Working Papers Nos. 4 and 5, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, n.d. [1975-76].

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46. Ebihara, pp. 241, 251.

47. Ibid., pp. 240-241, 251.

48. Remy Prud'homme, L'Economiedu Cambodge, p. 38; Roland Thomas, "L'Evolution économique du Cambodge, 1900-1940," These de Doctorat de Troisieme Cycle, Universite de Paris, VII (1978), p. 278. All figures for that period, including total population, are only rough estimates.

49. "Some Environmental Considerations for the Mekong Basin Project," edited by David Challinor, Smithsonian Institute, printed for. SEADAG, April 1973, pp. 14, 26, 58, 119.

50. Wilfred Burchett, The China Cambodia Vietnam Triangle, p: 122.

51. For his fate in DK, see below, p. 52.

52. Jacques Migozzi, Cambodge faits et problèmes de population, p. 35.

53. Roland Thomas, tables 60-61, p. 251, and remark, p. 245; Prud'homme, p.44.

54. Srok Khmer (Khmer language magazine, Phnom Penh), No. 38, August 1930; Annuaire statistique retrospectif du Cambodge 1937-1957. All further statistics below are from the official Cambodian government Annuaire Statistique for relevant years, unless otherwise indicated.

55. Prud'homme, p. 55.

56. République khmer. Annuaire statistique 1971, p. 131, tableau 12.

57. Sihanouk was quoted in Agence Khmer de Presse, Bulletin, October 28, 1961. Three years later, in La Depèche du Cambodge (newspaper, Phnom Penh), December 11, 1964, Chau Seng, then Minister of Agriculture, wrote that Cambodian youth were badly prepared for agriculture or industry. Most students and parents, he said, thought the goal of education was the position of civil servant. He suggested a triple curriculum lycee syllabus (general, agricultural, industrial).

58. Some of the earlier generations of the elite ignored educational opportunities which were available, presumably because they already had wealth and status, while the first notable example of Cambodians acquiring status through personal modernization and education was that of the upstart Thiounns - see above, note 36.

59. See my "Looking back at Cambodia" in Ben Kiernan and Chantou Boua, eds., Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea 1942-1981.

60. Front de l'Union National de Kampuchea (umbrella organization of Sihanoukists and communists 1970-75), Bulletin, Paris, March 3, 1971.

61. I am repeating her emphasis with all fidelity.

62. Charles Meyer, Derrière le sourire khmer, pp. 163-164.

63. This may still come as a surprise to many Americans, who because of their equation of 'socialism' and deviltry, not shared by the rest of the world, were often misled by Third World developments, in particular in Cambodia.

64. One published statement was from Sihanouk's interview with a Rumanian correspondent, in Kambuja (magazine, Phnom Penh), January 15, 1964.

65. That is, if they showed anything at all. See Prud'homme, pp. 194-195, on "l'insuffisance de la comptabilité": "certaines entreprises ne parviennent pas à établir convenablement les documents comptables les plus élémentaires"; and the case of an enterprise which, very profitable in private hands, incurred losses when nationalized, even with a monopoly. Prudhomme seems to have considered such things as defects in the system; but they were, on the contrary, the system.

66. Meyer, p. 179.

67. Ibid.

68. Prud'homme, p. 68.

69. Migozzi, pp. 36-37, tables 1-2.

70. Prud'homme, figures for 1967, pp. 43, 44, 92; 1967-68 are the last relatively reliable prewar Cambodian statistics.

71. In his Banyaha sahakor ("The cooperative question") (Phnom Penh, 1964), Hou Yuon, an economist and member of the revolutionary leadership during 1970-75, but who disappeared immediately after the end of the war, devoted some attention to organizing peasants for additional work during the slack season. Once cooperatives had been set up, he reasoned, the time formerly wasted could be used to "cut firewood, make palm sugar, raise animals, transport produce, weave mats and baskets, etc .; or they could get together to make rice-field embankments, dig irrigation ditches and tanks, ... construct and repair roads, and make fertilizer by all possible means" - precisely the activities to which DK cooperative residents were constrained and which constitute one of the subjects of their complaints about that regime.

72. One example from the rural anti-government side is the family of Non Suon, a high-ranking communist from 1954 to 1976. He had 10 brothers and sisters; one was killed by 'the enemy' in 1971, one died during the war in 1971 or 1972, another died in battle in 1973, and a fourth died in the liberated zone in 1974. One of his wife's 5 brothers died in battle and 2 died in the liberated zone; and one of his 3 children died in a mine explosion in 1975. These figures, from Non Suon's confessions after his arrest in November 1976 (see below chap. 3, note 122), are comparable to the losses suffered by many evacuated urban families during the DK period.

73. It is likely that such was the fate of many of my own acquaintances, for many teachers and students from Kompong

Thom, where I worked in 1960-62, joined the revolutionary forces before 1975. One teacher colleague, Kang Saran, died either in prison in 1969 or in the maquis in 1970, and a student, Kaing Gek Ieu ("Deuch"), became director of the Tuol Sleng prison under Pol Pot (see below, pp. 151-152).

74. This characterization, which might seem too harsh, is justified not just by observation of prewar Phnom Penh society, but also by the behavior of many of those people in the Khao I Dang refugee center in 1980, where they often resisted minimal regulations which were necessary for the operation of such an emergency settlement. One such instance, which could have endangered the continuation of the refugee program, was the collection, and black market sale to Thai villagers outside the camp, of surplus rice from the rations distributed within Khao I Dang; and it required the threat of DK-type disciplinary measures to stop it: The refugees were told by the United Nations camp administration that anyone caught engaging in such black market activities would be put to work at hard labor (i.e., digging ditches), and if they refused that, since the U.N. had no enforcement apparatus of its own, they would be turned over to the camp's Thai guards, who had already proved that they could deal out brutal reprisals with the same insouciance as DK cadres.

75. As Jean Lacouture put it, in one of his usual well-turned phrases (Survive, p. 73), "if they live all together in camps or large agglomerations, the shipwrecked, or exiles, or deportees have a tendency to excite one another's imagination and to invent stories [each] more terrible, more violent, more moving than the last. ... " In

contrast to the point of view taken here, however, Lacouture believed that the danger had been obviated by the careful research of Ponchaud.

## Chapter 2 Problems of Sources and Evidence

Just before the end of the war in 1975 Saloth Sar was characterized as one of those who “have now filtered back” among the “Hanoi 6000,” a group of Khmer Communists who went to Vietnam in 1954 and were supposed to be in a dominant position among the "Khmer Rouge."1

After the new Democratic Kampuchean (DK) government had been formed and the names of its leaders made known to the outside world, our attention was called to “the undoubted strength of the pro-Hanoi faction within the Khmer Rouge, led by … Ieng Sary.” A month later it was repeated that Ieng Sary “leans toward Hanoi,” while Khieu Samphan was “regarded as pro-Chinese,” and Saloth Sar was believed to have been co-founder of the Pracheachon, a Cambodian left-wing party made up of former Khmer-Viet-minh fighters who also led the 1970-75 war.2

Another source qualified Ieng Sary as “one of the leading stooges of Hanoi,” as was Son Sen, the New Minister of National Defense, while Khieu Samphan was “a genuine nationalist,” which for the speaker meant somewhat sympathetic to Sihanouk. After the reorganization of the DK government in early 1976 we were told further that Ieng Sary, who had clearly emerged as the strong man, was “Stalinist,” and

that apart from Khieu Samphan, all “who were known to support close ties with China as a counter-weight against the traditionally feared and hated Vietnamese, have disappeared from the new list of officials.”

"All key positions are now in the hands of either pro-Hanoi, pro-Moscow, or… unknown Cambodians."3 Because of this it was expected that Hanoi’s role in Cambodia would increase, and that the Russians would move slowly into Cambodia on the heels of the Vietnamese.

Now the foregoing assessments did not come from the pens of any of the madhatters among Southeast Asia watchers, but were published in the pages of the most credible news magazine specializing in Asia. They are appropriate in introducing this chapter because they illustrate forcefully how simple prejudice - in this case the idea that Cambodian leftist dissidents must be somehow working for Vietnam - could totally distort what we now know to have been the true situation. Of the DK leadership, Ieng Sary and Saloth Sar-Pol Pot in particular never were pro-Vietnamese, and became increasingly anti-Vietnamese as time went on; while those who were in any degree at all pro-Vietnamese were mercilessly eliminated between 1975 and 1979.

The pro-Vietnamese categorization of Cambodian leftists in general was a type of Standard Total View based on incomplete and selective evidence; and it prefigures what I have chosen to call the refugees’ Standard Total View (STV) of the Democratic Kampuchea

(DK) and Salvation Front (SF)/People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) regimes which has permeated most of the writing on Cambodia since 1975.

## Refugees - the sources for recent history

Until 1979, when significant numbers of journalists and other foreigners were allowed into Cambodia, and 1980-81, when scholars were permitted to engage in research within the country, virtually all information about life in Cambodia after 1975 came from refugees.4

Cambodians began fleeing their country even before the end of the war on April 17, 1975; and the first refugees proper crossed the Thai border the next day, mostly in the Aranyaprathet and Pailin areas. The first camp for them in Aranyaprathet was set up behind an old temple named Wat Koh; and in those days 5,000 refugees would have been considered a large number. At that time they were free to leave the camp to move around town, visit acquaintances, and find work if possible.5

Most of them were more or less well-educated town dwellers with contacts, friends or relatives abroad; and most of them eventually made their way to western countries, principally France and the United States. By 1977 the total number of Khmer refugees in Thailand, including those crossing over in Chanthaburi or Trat and over the northern border to Surin and Buriram, had increased to around 20,000. They were no longer allowed to move around freely and their condition was more like that of prisoners. Up to January

1979 the total number of Khmer refugees may have been no more than 30-40,000.6

With the destruction of DK in early 1979, and the ensuing freedom of movement, many people began moving towards the border.

Just like the refugees of the 1975-79 period, this new movement involved mostly former urban residents, who rejected peasant life and sought a way of life like the one they had known before April 1975. Unlike the pre-1979 period, these new ‘refugees’ were not fleeing from political repression which, for them, had ended with the destruction of the DK administration in their districts. Neither were they, at least in the first half of 1979 and often longer, fleeing from starvation, since the stocks of rice left by the old regime together with the rice in the fields ready for harvest meant that for several months there was adequate food in most parts of the country for those who stayed in place.7

The principal reasons for the new movement, without making any attempt to assess their relative order of importance, were (1) to make contact with the outside world for the purpose of either going abroad or contacting friends or relatives already abroad; (2) to trade across the border for commercial purposes; (3) to join, or organize, one of the para-military or bandit groups loosely called Khmer Serei, 'Free Khmer."8

The first people who tried to go abroad, or even to contact relatives, were mostly from the former wealthy, well-educated groups who had

had some earlier experience abroad and who spoke French or English. In the beginning, when they were few in number, it was relatively easy, particularly if they still had some currency or gold, to cross the border, contact a foreign embassy, and get out to some other country. They would then write back to family and friends in Cambodia about the ease with which they had managed their departure, thus encouraging more and more to attempt it.9 However, as numbers increased, so did the Thai border controls; and such immediate departure increased in difficulty until it became virtually impossible.

Many more people came to trade. Most of them had been non-peasants before 1975 and they considered petty commerce both higher in status and more remunerative than farming. They came to the border with currency, jewels, gold, or other valuable objects hidden since 1975, and bought Thai products to take back and sell at a profit which would finance another journey. Throughout 1979 there was a constant procession of thousands or tens of thousands of such people on the roads from Battambang and Siemreap to the border. Some of them, having started as border traders, then decided to attempt emigration, which might involve several months waiting at the border for the right occasion to cross. Others decided to remain at the border as middlemen in the growing volume of trade, or they joined a Khmer Serei organization, which also lived off the trade, and plotted the reconquest of Cambodia.10

The third main group of border arrivals were the ‘politicals,’ again mostly former urbanites or military men who had been victimized by

the DK regime, but who were equally opposed to its successor on grounds of its socialism and dependence on Vietnam. These people wanted the restoration of a system like that of Sihanouk's Sangkum or Lon Nol's Republic, and to a greater or lesser extent they were willing to fight for that goal - in contrast to people who had given up on Cambodia and thought only of going abroad.

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They came to the border to organize their resistance both because it was impossible to do so within Cambodia and because they hoped for external aid, in particular from the United States and Thailand. The extent to which such aid was forthcoming is impossible to assess, and in fact matters little for a study of Cambodia in 1979-81,11 since, as it soon became clear, most of the Khmer Serei were less rather than more eager to fight, could not in any case agree on leaders or organization, and found their true vocation in the control of cross-border trade and refugee traffic - activities in which most of them degenerated to the level of bandits and racketeers.12

The places along the border to which these people came were clandestine border crossing points known to smugglers, bandits, and various 'politicals' long before 1979, or even 1975. The original Khmer Serei had operated along this border in the 1950s and '60s; and before them Issaraks had used the same forest clearings and

border trails, in the 1940s as now hoping for Thai aid against the, then French, government in Phnom Penh.13 After 1975 there was still a lively cross-border trade between Thai merchants and representatives of the new Cambodian authorities, which on one occasion led to a murderous incident very close to the location of the present border agglomerations;14 one of the 1979 Khmer Serei leaders was reported to have been a teak smuggler based at Phnom Malai throughout the DK period;15 and the first people who came in 1979 knew, or could easily find out, the best border points for their purposes.

Three of these border points gradually turned into large camps which still existed throughout 1980. All three are opposite Thai villages which, for outsiders, have given their names to the refugee agglomerations. The first, in terms of its initial importance in 1979, is opposite the village of Non Mak Mun. Five miles to the north is the 'new camp,' opposite the village of Nong Samet; and three miles to the south near the village of the same name is the Nong Chan camp.

By June 1979 there were well over 40,000 people massed along the border north of Aranyaprathet either within, or outside, the three camps, and increasing numbers of them were hoping to cross into Thailand and proceed onwards to other countries. Unlike the first few hundred who had earlier succeeded in such plans, there was no possibility of the new large numbers being accepted abroad. The Thai, furthermore, did not consider people who came over after January 7, 1979, the date the Salvation Front (SF)-Vietnamese forces captured Phnom Penh, as genuine refugees.

They were ‘displaced persons’ on the Cambodian side of the border, and ‘illegal immigrants’ on the Thai side. People nevertheless kept coming, and the Thai professed to fear that they might be stuck for their support and embarrassed or threatened by their politics. Not much international attention had been directed to these refugees, for humanitarian concern with Cambodia was still concentrated on events within the country and the alleged perilous state of the people there.

The Thai therefore decided on drastic measures to call international attention to the situation and to discourage the people grouped along the border from attempting to become refugees in Thailand. In the third week of June about 42,000 of them were loaded onto buses on the Thai side and taken on a long journey northward around the border between the two countries to a point south of Srisaket and forced down narrow mountain trails. in the Preah Vihear area, sometimes across minefields, back into Cambodia. Perhaps thousands died.16 Some of the survivors were indeed discouraged and decided to make their peace with the new government. Many others, perhaps most, drifted back to the border and could be found again in 1980-81 in all the refugee camps.

The Thai move was effective in drawing attention to the problem.

There was a wave of international protest and some pressure was exerted on the Thai to institute more humane policies.17 Their action, if planned as a measure to rid themselves of the

pseudo-refugee problem at the border, proved in the end to have been counterproductive. It called attention to the Khmer massed along the border north of Aranyaprathet, and eventually resulted in programs which would attract even more of them, bringing them across the border semi-permanently. It is arguable that had the Thai left those people alone, tolerating the trading which had supported most of them, and taking severe action only against the few who might have tried to force their way into Thailand, the stated goal of discouraging the refugee exodus might have been more readily achieved.

It was suggested at the time that another 30,000 Khmer in Chanthaburi and Trat provinces might get the same treatment, but they were DK forces, and the different treatment accorded the two groups is perhaps a clue to certain unexpressed goals of Thai policy. One Thai official was quoted to the effect that although the world was accusing the Thai of lack of humanitarian feeling, “when we help them, they say we’re not neutral,” Bangkok is accused of helping Pol Pot "merely because refugees had been permitted to enter."18

This disingenuous explanation ignored the differences between the two groups. Those sent back were all anti-DK as everyone well knew; whereas those whose asylum might conceivably help DK were given special treatment.

The enforced return to Cambodia of the 42,000 coincided with increasing discussion of conditions within Cambodia and the need for aid to all Cambodians whether on the border or in the interior.

There were increasing numbers of reports of countrywide starvation and epidemics. The U.S. State Department, whose analysts had not considered that Cambodia was in a crisis, was pressured by “American charities and their own embassy staff in Bangkok” to change their views, even though they had "serious second thoughts about the [embassy’s] data."19 The genesis of this change in U.S. attitude is interesting in view of later information suggesting the crisis was exaggerated.

Whatever the true situation, one of the stumbling blocks to increased aid was the question of whether it should be delivered directly to Phnom Penh or pushed across the Thai border. Another, related to the first, was the question of aiding both sides. In general the U.S. and Thai favored a cross-border operation with no overt political discrimination; and the Swedes were also pressing to send aid across the northern border to the 42,000 believed stranded in northern Cambodia.20

Phnom Penh insisted that all aid should go through its hands and none to the DK remnants near the border. In the end aid went both to Phnom Penh, by plane or through the port of Kompong Som, and across the border north and south of Aranyaprathet, where the Thai continued to supply the DK remnants as they had done in the past,21 and where the international and voluntary organizations gave help both to the DK groups and to the anti-Communist Khmer Serei camps from which food was then transported inland to the northwestern provinces.

While attention had been fixed primarily on conditions within Cambodia and on the anti-Communist refugees north of Aranyaprathet, an entirely different group of people were slowly proceeding toward the border and their appearance, beginning in September 1979, was to be the catalyst for a new system of refugee organization.

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When the SF/Vietnamese forces invaded Cambodia in early 1979 and defeat for the DK regime was imminent, most of the DK military and political forces, together with as many ordinary people as they could gather up, withdrew gradually from the towns and rice plains into the forests and mountains of western and northwestern Cambodia. There, for as long as seven months for some, they moved slowly away from the attacking Vietnamese toward the Thai border, through inhospitable, malaria-ridden country, with dwindling food supplies, no medicine, and wracked by internal tensions left over from the factional disputes and purges of the Pol Pot years.22

By the time they erupted onto the Thai border - not at the points discussed above, but to the south of Aranyaprathet - they were in the pitiful condition shown to the world by the press in September and October 1979, dying by the scores from illness and hunger. Other groups of these DK refugees also crossed into the southeast in

Chanthaburi and Trat where there had already been a large border concentration at Ban Laem as early as July, but the groups which attracted the most attention were those who came out about 20 km south of Aranyaprathet. The pity their condition aroused caused people to forget or ignore their leaders' political past, and emergency aid was rushed in from all quarters.23

In mid-September Thai officials led by Air Marshal Siddhi Savetsila, then Secretary-General of the National Security Council, visited the border where the new exodus was taking place and announced that 60,000 people were massing there, and moving closer to escape Vietnamese pressure. In early October they crossed.

Under this pressure Thai policy gradually changed.

They accepted that aid must be given, but they could not do it alone. Help was requested from Western countries and international agencies on condition that aid going through Thailand must be non-political and must go to all sides of the Cambodian conflict.24

By the end of October Prime Minister Kriangsak had announced an open door policy "allowing all Khmer refugees who wished to come to Thailand to do so."25 This was not meant to be a change of strategy; "there must be some people alive in order to oppose the Vietnamese in Kampuchea … it will just take longer," meaning apparently longer than the earlier tactic of forcing everyone back into the country as soon as they reached the border.

This statement at least demonstrated that any observer who had seen covert objectives, beyond concerns for Thai security, in earlier Thai policy toward the refugees, was not entirely wrong. The covert objective was now clearly to use the refugee situation to influence future political development within Cambodia.

About 30,000 of the newly arrived DK refugees were settled in a camp near the town of Sakeo, about 50 km from the border,26 and another large group established itself on and around the fortified base of Phnom Malai, an old Khmer Serei hideout just inside the Cambodian border about 20 km south of Aranyaprathet. Still a third group of these DK remnants set up a base at Phnom Chhat, inside Cambodia north of Nong Samet, and in the southeast the camps of Kamphut and Mairud welcomed those who crossed over in that region.

The attention given by the press to these DK refugees had several important effects:

(1) international attention was directed to the Cambodian refugees and relief efforts were intensified;

(2) the Thai government reversed its policy and agreed to open its borders and establish ‘holding centers’ to care for the refugees until such time as they could either return home or go on to ‘third countries’;

(3) a belief grew both abroad and in Thailand that all Cambodian refugees were in the same pitiful shape and that they were fleeing starvation at home; and (4) this supposed evidence of administrative failure served as propaganda ammunition against the SF regime and the Vietnamese efforts to support it.

Some hints of the different situation did come through from a close reading of a journal like Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER), which reported accurately that north of Aranyaprathet conditions were different. At the Nong Samet camp, whose estimated population of 80,000 was believed to be the largest concentration of Cambodians in the world, “most people [were] in relatively good health” - in fact there were attempts to conceal the quantities of food in the camp - and a brisk trade across the border into Cambodia was observed.27

The journalists nevertheless believed things were changing. Newly arrived refugees reported tighter travel restrictions, and three of them had stories of Vietnamese firing on people to keep them from reaching the border.28 Thus the reports of increasing starvation within Cambodia and the new rumors of Vietnamese brutality served to convince outside observers that the refugee exodus would increase at all points and that they would all be in increasingly poor physical condition. It should have been recognized as significant though - and the significance increases in the light of what happened a bit later, in November-December - that even when Prime Minister Kriangsak opened the door in October, there was no large-scale movement of the 80,000 people at Nong Samet or the other thousands in Mak Mun and Nong Chan, to take advantage of it.

With the door open and a massive exodus expected, some place had to be prepared to receive them. There was already a plan for one huge holding center for 200-300,000 at Mairud in Trat province and four to five smaller centers elsewhere. Then, in late October or early November it was decided to build the large center at Khao I Dang (KID) and leave Mairud as one of the smaller camps.29 The latter was in the area of the first large exodus of DK refugees and the originally planned giant camp would have served as a relief and rehabilitation center for them; but by September or October it was clear that the main DK operations were going to be farther north near Aranyaprathet.30

More important, probably, was a belief that vast numbers of new refugees were being pushed out of the northwest by famine within Cambodia and Vietnamese harassment. The FEER wrote on November 16, 1979 that 180,000 people had already crossed the border north of Aranyaprathet and cited diplomatic sources as placing another 130-150,000 within striking distance. It added that within the next two months Thailand could get up to 750,000 people. By November 30, the estimate was 600,000 on the border, meaning that 14% of Cambodia's estimated 4 million population was either

in Thailand or ready to enter. By December 7, as the "plight of the Khmers daily grows more desperate," "the survival of the Khmer race [might] depend on the exodus into Thailand"; and it was foreseen that in the coming months a million Khmer, or up to a quarter of the estimated population, could be under Thai control.31 In these

circumstances the Thai, who would not consider accepting 40,000 in June, now agreed to take several hundred thousand; and certain more astute observers did not fail to note the political advantages which might thereby accrue to Bangkok from the effective control of such a large part of the total Cambodian population.

As a result of the new developments and predictions, the Thai Supreme Command chose Khao I Dang as the site for the new major holding center and gave the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) the green light to set it up in the expectation that 300,000 or so miserable Khmer would rush across to settle there; and on November 21, 1979 the first small team of UNHCR officials waited on the bleak landscape for the buses and trucks sent out to bring the people in.32

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To their astonishment, in the first week after the opening of KID, only 28,000 people took the opportunity to enter, and they were in fairly good condition. Many of them had cash or gold and hoped to set up business in the new campsite. In the second and third weeks 16,500 and 29,800 respectively arrived and then the numbers dropped to under 4,000 for each of the following three weeks. In the seventh week, the first week of January 1980, the total jumped again to just over 21,000, because of fighting among Khmer Serei factions in the

border camps; but immediately afterward fell to 2,800 for the eighth week, under 2,000 in the ninth week, and then fewer than 1,000 per week. Often half the vehicles sent out to transport the refugees returned empty. On January 24, 1980, when the total population was about 111,000, just over a third of what had been expected, Thai authorities ordered KID closed to further entry.33

It appeared that the UNHCR might have been misled. The number of people prepared to become refugees was only a fraction of that estimated and most of them were hardly in circumstances justifying refugee treatment. Indeed many of those who did come required persuasion, or they came to KID, like the mountain climber, “because it was there.” Otherwise they would have continued to trade between the border and the interior, and as conditions at home improved, gradually returned.34

Although KID was closed in January 1980 that was not the end of it.

Once created, a place where people could sit indefinitely in security, on welfare, it inevitably became a magnet drawing more people out of Cambodia. The magnet effect was operative because the Thai guards could be bribed to let new people in at night; and the population thus rose from 111,000 in January 1980 to 136,000 in July. The increase represented almost entirely middle-class former town dwellers whose goal was resettlement in another country. They were also often people possessing skills needed within Cambodia, who had been offered suitable employment by the new regime, and who would not have attempted to leave if a place like KID did not

exist. The magnet was kept charged in various ways. Messages could easily be sent back to Cambodia via the same underground routes which brought out clandestine new arrivals, and they told friends and relatives of the good deal at KID.

The Voice of America kept up its news of Cambodians finding freedom across the border.

Some people even left KID clandestinely and went all the way back to Phnom Penh to lead out relatives who were too timid, or who lacked funds to make the trip alone. All of this traffic was facilitated by the nearly absolute freedom of movement permitted by the new Cambodian authorities.35

These refugee camps, and their inhabitants, were the sources for most of the information in the following chapters, and also for most information about Cambodia which has been published elsewhere about the DK period.

The bias of nearly all such people is against both the DK and SF/PRK governments, and thus any information tending to show either one in a favorable light is contrary to the preconceptions and intentions of those informants.

If there is a conscious distortion in their testimony, it is nearly always in a negative sense.

That is particularly true of the bourgeois refugees who formed the majority of the population at KID and Nong Samet. They were the most disfavored group in DK and quite reasonably view that regime with distaste. Their opposition to the PRK stems from prejudice against both socialism and Vietnam; and their information about the new Cambodian government is also conditioned by the circumstance that having left the country as refugees and rejected the employment offered to them in 1979-80, they can no longer go back, and their only future lies in resettlement abroad.36

As for the inhabitants of the Sakeo camp, mainly DK cadres, military, or base peasants, most of them who remained in mid-1980 had become disillusioned with that regime, and they also had little to say in its favor, although their experiences had been quite different from the lives of the KID refugees. The really hard-core DK supporters who had been at Sakeo returned to Cambodia in June 1980 before I had met any of them, but a number of interviews collected by Stephen Heder have been incorporated here.37

Both types of people at Sakeo were unsympathetic to the PRK, and for at least one of the same reasons as the KID refugees, dislike of the Vietnamese.

There are thus inherent biases in the material used for this study, but they are the same biases as have affected most other work on contemporary Cambodia, and the differences which may appear here will therefore be due to the way in which I have used the material rather than to the material itself.

## The Standard Total View (STV)

According to the STV, DK tried to exterminate all those who during the Sihanouk and Lon Nol periods had served in the military or had held civilian administrative posts, were otherwise urban elite, and all other 'intellectuals,' meaning all who had more than basic primary schooling, in particular doctors, teachers, technicians; and the members of these groups who survived only did so by concealing their identities between April 17, 1975 and early 1979, or whatever earlier date they managed to escape from Cambodia.

In addition to direct extermination of such class enemies, the STV holds that the regime deliberately abolished schooling, medical care, and religion; sought to destroy the family, in particular by tearing children from parents; and, through deliberate efforts to deprive the population of an adequate diet, caused the deaths of large numbers of those people who escaped the extermination dragnet. Ethnic minorities, in particular the Moslem Chams, are supposed to have been special extermination targets; and there have been statements to the effect that attractive women were in danger simply by virtue of their physical qualities. An extreme STV held by some refugees asserts that the ultimate purpose of the extermination and starvation policies was to eliminate most Cambodians so that the country could be settled by Chinese. Earlier on, as illustrated by the FEER articles cited above, the sellout was supposed to have been to Vietnam too, but by 1977 at least DK had decisively given the lie to that canard. The policies imputed to the new DK government,

according to the STV, were perverse and had no rational basis in either economic or political necessity; and the people who were the chief victims, the former town dwellers, being tired of the war in 1975, welcomed the revolutionary victory, and would have cooperated willingly in efforts to restore and redevelop the country.

The basic STV also holds that the policies outlined above were invariant as to time or place; the scenario was true everywhere, all the time, between April 1975 and January 1979. The explanation offered for such aberrant policies is 'Communism,' or by the more sophisticated, 'Maoism,' in particular its Cultural Revolution.38 The first compilations giving currency to such views were the books of Ponchaud and Barron/Paul; and journalistic accounts during the two years following their publication repeated that "all intellectuals," or "all doctors," or "all former military" had been killed, or that 1 million Khmer died in the first year, or that Cambodian women had become infertile and the birthrate was not sufficient to replenish the population.

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There is also an STV on the PRK regime. While acknowledging that the Vietnamese intervention put an end to the flagrant brutalities of the DK period and thereby saved the lives of many who would have been executed or worked to death, it holds that in a more subtle way

the new Phnom Penh authorities may be as dangerous as their predecessors, and at its most extreme asserts living conditions have declined absolutely since January 1979 and that the Khmer now are in danger of disappearing as a race.39

The STV for 1979-81, while admitting that mass executions had not occurred, still asserted that the Vietnamese wished to destroy the surviving Khmer intellectuals, and if they had not yet started killing them, they soon would. It was alleged that Khmer intellectuals and administrators were sent for study and training to Vietnam, from which they never returned, that others simply disappear, or are arrested and imprisoned for undisclosed reasons. The Vietnamese were further accused of destroying Cambodia by taking away the rice which was available in early 1979, misappropriating rice seed, preventing people from harvesting, holding up distribution of foreign aid, and attempting to massacre those who came to the Thai border to receive such aid 40

In the administration Vietnamese are supposed to occupy all posts of authority with the Khmer serving only as flunkies. Study of Vietnamese language is “forced” into the school syllabus, and provincial school administration tied to a Vietnamese ‘sister province,’ rather than the national Ministry of Education, in such a way that, so the story goes, even selection of new teachers, curricula and school books is controlled by distant Vietnamese authorities.4!

The goal of such alleged Vietnamese policies is to make Cambodia a mere province of Vietnam with the Khmer as second class

inhabitants, since the destruction and absorption of Cambodia, according to these sources, has always been a principal objective of Vietnamese policy in Indochina.

This second STV has also found its supporters in the western press, and among them we find again Ponchaud and Anthony Paul. In a way this represents consistency on Ponchaud's part, since in his earlier work he tried to find a Vietnamese devil behind DK actions, which then proved illusory.42

The STV has permeated public consciousness to such an extent that it has become conventional wisdom and may be forced on evidence which does not support it.

In the summer of 1980 the Associated Press Bangkok correspondent Denis Gray wrote of a young Cambodian girl drawing a peaceful scene of fields and peasants, something which, he asserted she had never seen. Gray was referring to a drawing made by a Cambodian refugee child at the Khao I Dang Camp. Two large collections of drawings by such refugee children were assembled, and both have been taken as irrefutable evidence of the total horror of the Communist DK regime and the damage which may have been done to the children's minds by what they had witnessed.

The first of these collections was organized by UNESCO in April 1980 in two refugee camps, Khao I Dang and Sakeo, in the form of a contest. Over five hundred children responded. In KID all children were invited to enter drawings. This produced 400. Then their

teachers chose the best 200 and told the artists to do another. From this second group about 70 were selected and the artists were told to produce new drawings to be sent to the contest judges. Altogether 106 drawings were selected by teachers in the two camps for judging, and prizes were awarded to 29 drawings, 26 of which were eventually published in a booklet, Kampuchean Chronicles,43 The organizers of the contest did not set any theme or issue any guidelines, and the compilers of the booklet felt that the drawings "do not carry a specific message." In spite of that the world's press understood those drawings as a collection of horror portraits and as a total condemnation of the DK period.44 Likewise, the principal of the KID school, a refugee teacher, declared at the prize-giving ceremony that about 70% of the drawings depicted Communist horrors, which proved the evil of the DK regime and the deleterious effect on the children's psychology.

As far as I was able to determine, no one had ever taken an interest in examining precisely what the drawings really did show. I arrived at Khao I Dang too late to see even the last selection of 70 pictures, let alone the earlier sets, but one foreign relief agency worker who had, estimated that no more than 10% of the earlier sets showed acts of violence. What could, however, be seen at the school in May were many large technically well-done portrayals of mass executions and other horrors drawn by the school art teachers, and representing scenes which they admittedly had not all witnessed but which were composites of events reported by various people, or inferences from circumstances which had been brought to their attention. Whatever the children really saw and experienced, there was at least subtle

encouragement by the school staff to draw scenes of Communist violence. For the staff, whatever the intention of UNESCO, the children's drawing contest was a perfect occasion to dramatize their own view of the years 1975-79.

Without the cooperation of the foreign press, however, the propaganda effort might have misfired, for it is true that the drawings as a whole "do not carry a specific message." Of the 26 in Kampuchean Chronicles, only five show scenes of Communist violence. One other is a violent fantasy in which the identities of the actors are unclear; and the young artist stated that he would "be happy to go back [to Cambodia] because I'll be able to see my parents." Two other children, one of whom drew a prosperous scene of the collection of palm juice and the preparation therefrom of sugar, and one whose picture was not published, reported the death of family members, either by violence or hunger. There are also several other non-violent scenes depicting people who are very thin and tired. On the other hand five drawings are of perfectly normal, healthy peasant life, two are of Khao I Dang Camp, and two are fantasies of unclear meaning. Four more of the drawings depict a file of people, often very thin, proceeding on foot through the forest, and it would have been worthwhile asking the children what they had in mind. In any case they do not portray the exodus from the towns in April 1975 or the 'second exodus' later that year.45

There are two likely possibilities - either the overnight trek from the border to Khao I Dang or the often months-long emigration of those who followed or were driven by the DK forces into the forests after

the Vietnamese invasion of 1979. One of the drawings is clearly the latter, for the boy who drew it said that his family, friends and neighbors had left the village together and “for seven months we walked through the forest,” where a younger brother and sister died. As for life back home, before 1979, he reported that his happiest memory was “catching fish in the sea,” for “here in the camp we don’t eat fish very often … [and] when we do, it comes in a tin,” something he found ridiculous. The artist of a similar scene mentioned that for three years he had not gone to school, but “at first I was happy … I played and swam all day.” And the scene on the back cover of the booklet, because of the number of people involved, almost certainly represents the 1979 DK flight from the Vietnamese.46

Other interesting comments by the children were, “I don’t get enough to eat here … but I didn’t get enough to eat in Kampuchea either. But there all of us ate together - my father, mother, sister and brother … [and] now I have to eat alone or with other children,” the reason for which is not explained. Or the remark by one of the boys who drew a normal field scene, “I was both happy and sad to leave the village … happy because I could get away from a very hard life, … sad because I had to leave the house where I was born.” And finally the boy who reported that, "after we left our village we reached Seam Reap [sic] and the temples of Angkor Wat [where] we stayed … for a long, long time … [and] cleaned the temples [which] were covered with moss."47

This collection of drawings, then, does not have a ‘specific message.’ Like most evidence from Cambodia it has several, only one of which has been noted in the presentation to the outside world.

The second collection of children’s drawings resulted from a free drawing class organized at the request of Jack Reynolds of NBC, who wanted to do a television film on the children of Khao I Dang. When they were finished Reynolds collected just over 100 drawings to take with him for further study in preparing his program, on which he repeated that DK stood condemned by the children’s testimony, and that the peaceful scenes in the collection must represent memories of the pre-1975 period.48

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Careful tally of 102 of those drawings which I was able to examine, however, reveals that only 22 show scenes of violence at all. One of those, in fact one of the artistically more imaginative, represents a refugee run down and killed by a truck in Khao I Dang; two of them seem to be from the Khmer Serei border camps; and one shows in the lower left-hand corner two groups of soldiers in combat against a background of lush fields, well-filled coconut trees, and a cheerful-looking peasant house. When I asked the young artist what the scene represented, she pointed out that DK soldiers were defending the farm against invading Vietnamese - so much for the idea that all scenes of prosperous peasant life are pre-war memories, or that all memories of violence are of DK atrocities.

This leaves eighteen of 102 pictures, which really do show DK harshness, including murder and torture, against the population; and even this group includes two scenes of what would have been normal field labor for real peasants, but where the clear presence of armed guards conveys the idea of forced labor by the 'new' people. Of the eighty remaining drawings thirty-eight are pictures of the refugee camp or entirely unrealistic, but non-violent, fantasies; and five show people moving through the forest from a Khmer Serei camp, such as Nong Samet, to Khao I Dang.49 The last group of thirty-seven, twice the number of Communist-oppression scenes, are pictures of peaceful peasant life or lush fields, the type of scene which Gray imagined they had never seen and which Reynolds considered to be pre-DK memories.

Now, without interrogating each child - which was not done - it is impossible to know for certain what the full intention of any drawing was; or to say with absolute certainty that none of the pictures represent pre-war scenes. But since in all of the identifiable drawings it is clear that more recent memories were uppermost - no child, for example, drew the exodus from the towns in 1975, a large number drew scenes of camp life; and very many, even when drawing farming scenes within Cambodia, put the mountain of Khao I Dang in the background - it is likely that those peaceful country scenes also represented the life they had lived between 1975 and 1979. In some of the peaceful drawings there are even certain clues of recent vintage, such as cement-lined irrigation canals in the fields and a rice-transplanting scene in which people are wearing the typical

krama, the red and white checked scarf-sarong-head cloth which DK adopted as a sort of uniform insignia.50

Even this is not the whole story. I evoked above the possibility that for the first drawing contest the pupils might have been primed, in other words their evidence contaminated by later influences; and there seemed to be one clear case of this among the drawings done for Jack Reynolds. Among the 102 pupils were three - unfortunately only three - of the UNESCO prizewinners. One of them had on that earlier occasion presented a brilliantly colored Buddha image beneath a tree in the open countryside, possibly a work of pure artistic imagination since that type of image would almost never have been seen in a similar situation.

For Reynolds, however, the boy drew a standard Communist murder scene. When I questioned him about it he said it was really something he had witnessed, but the victim was a stranger, one of the “easterners brought over and killed in 1978,” a matter of some interest in itself.51 The evidence of his first drawing, though, shows that left to his own artistic interests he does not tend to recall and reproduce violence, and that some of these children have either caught on to what foreigners want to see, or the political requirements of refugee life may be recalling to their minds violence they had forgotten, or infusing them with scenes of violence they had never known.

Specific evidence of this is not lacking. Between May and September 1980 the adult artists of Khao I Dang kept turning out, for sale to the

international aid personnel or visitors, atrocity scenes increasingly grotesque in detail and thus increasingly the result of imaginative reconstruction rather than what they had experienced - precisely the same sort of situation as reported by Mannoni in his study of the psychology of another situation of revolutionary violence.52 Such adult 'artistic' work cannot help but influence whatever is reproduced by the children; and such influences probably account for the standardization of some of the children's scenes of violence, including certain details which were seldom, if ever, observed. Thus armed cadres are shown overseeing or abusing the 'new' people at work; but refugee testimony concurs that the cadres or base people who led work groups were rarely armed and were often real peasants who worked alongside the 'new' people.

Another bogus theme is in pictures of monks being defrocked en masse to the accompaniment of kicks and punches, something which if it happened at all was extremely rare.53

Any study of a social or historical situation has to begin with a description and evaluation of the sources; and the foregoing discussion of the refugee children's drawings is in order to illustrate how preconceived notions of outsiders may be imposed on the evidence, or, equally serious, how sources may be coached, or influenced by their environment to produce information different from what they might have offered spontaneously. The presence of this second difficulty in Cambodian refugee information is well known. Charles Twining, one of the U.S. Foreign Service officers specializing in Cambodia, offered the opinion that "you must talk to a

refugee as soon as he comes out for the story may become exaggerated";54 and another foreign service expert told me that for his own personal assessment of refugee information he discounts everything that is not first hand, that is, which the informant has not seen or experienced him or herself.

Less attention has been given to the bias of the reporter or researcher; and this gets us into a very complex area. Even though investigations of post-1975 Cambodia have generally been motivated by anything but intellectual objectivity, the very nature of the Cambodian question is such that a certain amount of subjective value judgment seems inevitable. At the very least each observer has certain views about what measures are permissible in order to effect social change and necessary to cope with political and social crises; and these views will inevitably color interpretations of even the most objective facts. So let no one imagine that any writer on contemporary Cambodia is merely searching for objective historical truth in the manner of one writing, say, about twelfth century Angkor. No even approximately adequate history of modern Cambodia has ever been produced. All of us have certain preconceptions - sometimes well-researched and thought out - about the situation before 1975 and about what should have happened following the defeat of the Lon Nol regime; and we are all in a way hoping to discover information to justify those - in most cases erroneous - preconceptions. For, as far as I know, everyone who thought seriously about Cambodia between 1970 and 1975 failed in one way or another to foresee what subsequently happened.

Possibly the only exception would be those who were convinced that the victors, being ‘Communist,’ were bound to do horrible things - a prediction which, even to the extent that it proved correct, was for the wrong reasons and thus of no value in serious study of the phenomena.55

Neither should a writer, or reader, accept that a simple, unqualified claim to interest in the welfare of the people is sufficient to justify any interpretation, for given the clear and deep divisions among Cambodians manifest since 1970 at the latest, any such stance involves implicit assumptions about who the real people are and which of them deserve most sympathy.

For example, in a hypothetical case in which a given population was split into two numerically equal halves going at each other with murderous intent, the outsider interested only in popular welfare would have no objective or moral reasons for preferring one side over the other or for assigning virtue or blame.

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The Cambodian situation very nearly approaches this hypothetical situation - probably more closely than any other real case we are likely to see. If it is true that 2.5-3.5 million permanent and temporary urbanites were displaced to the countryside as ‘new’ people in April

1975, the figure represents close to half the total population, who were considered as potential or actual enemies by the other half. This dichotomy, whatever the precise numerical relationship, had been apparent throughout the war of 1970-75.

Whatever else the conflict was, it was also, if not first of all, a war between town and countryside in which the town's battle was increasingly for the sole purpose of preserving its privileges while the rural areas suffered.56

The argument here, then, is that in 1975 Cambodia was divided into two numerically comparable camps, one of which had suffered immeasurably more than the other for five years, but nevertheless having won would dominate the other for the next four years, inflicting equal or greater damage on it, partly due to objective circumstances and partly out of revenge.

For the foreign observer or scholar now trying to study Cambodia, neither of the two factions merits an a priori ascription of moral superiority, and preferences for one or the other cannot be justified on any grounds of sympathy for the 'people' - unless, what has not usually been done in the West, one sides with the rural camp on the grounds that it had more people in 1975 and that they had already suffered more before and during the war.

This is not, however, the argument that I intend to emphasize here.

Any account which, from the vantage point of the present and assuming the information presented to be factual, casts blame on one camp while showing sympathy for the other must be based, not on any objective assessment of their works, but on preconceptions of the observer about the proper organization of society or the inherent morality-of particular points of view.

Furthermore, and I shall argue this in more detail, the same is true of any account written between 1975 and 1979, since the various sources of information were so contradictory and inconclusive. Even the appearance of hundreds or thousands of refugees who had undoubtedly suffered and who were nearly all from the urban sector, did not justify condemnation of the other side as a system, particularly during 1975-76 when there were also impressive, but usually neglected, witnesses who had no horror stories to tell at all. Neither, at least by late 1975, could true believers in the revolution offer a convincing picture of the Cambodian regime as essentially humane and benign; and their arguments, as much as those which decried the ordeal of Cambodia's townspeople, depended on ideology as much as on fact.

The ideological bias, and selection of information to fit that bias - assuming for the present that the information was true - is most clearly revealed in the two works which have had the widest currency: Barron's and Paul's Murder of a Gentle Land and Ponchaud's Cambodia Year Zero.57

The bias and selectivity are most obvious in Barron and Paul (B/P); and their work itself, if judged by the statistical information it offers, seems to have been conceived as a propaganda effort from the start.58

In their assessment of the qualities of the Cambodian Communist leadership they remark, “all had spent roughly half their adult lives abroad or in the jungles isolated from the daily realities of their country,” thus implying that for B/P the only Cambodian realities were the urban, not the peasant communities (as well as jungles) of Takeo, Kampot, Kompong Cham, wherethe Communist leadership spent the 1960s and early 1970s.39 And as for B/P’s urban realities, their own exotic, never-never description of Phnom Penh and the countryside also comes in part from the reminiscences of people who “had spent half their adult life abroad” and some of whom had seen little of the country since the early 1960s.60 This exotic paradise was what foreigners tended to see in the early 1960s, but only the most obtuse could have failed to realize the harsher realities coming to the surface after 1965.

But B/P no doubt preferred to rely on the comfortable memories of their informants whose elite status they take pains to stress: Ung Soc Choe, “son of a wealthy family,” “Banker Siv Hou,” “Pin-Sam Phon, supervisor of the city waterworks,” “a prosperous pharmacist, Kyheng Savang,” “a wealthy architect, Ly Bun Heng.” Even when their informants are not stated to be wealthy, the majority of them seem to be from elite groups (students, a Norodom, an intelligence officer); and in spite of B/P’s statement that “people from the lower

socioeconomic strata always composed the majority of refugees," which was in fact never true, one sees little sign of B/P taking any interest in them or their evidence.61

The truth of the stories given to B/P by their informants is not the most serious issue, although there could well be some exaggeration, or even untruth. There is no doubt that such things happened. The more important question about their book is the extent to which those stories were representative, both as to the type of experiences of the population as a whole, and of the conditions of Cambodia in 1975. Their extremely unrepresentative character can only have been a deliberate choice on the part of the authors, since even if people of lower strata were in a minority, some could have been found.

Barron and Paul could also have been more careful in examining reports of things their informants had not directly experienced, since some of them were rumors, now disproved, not facts. Thus the Communists, we now know, did not ransack and destroy all libraries, all printed matter, the Royal Palace, flinging documents into the streets or "tens … perhaps hundreds of thousands of books … into the Mekong"; and the route taken by one of their informants, Ly Bun Heng, shows that he could not possibly have seen what was happening at any of those places.62 From what we know of DK morality, the forced marriage of city girls with Communist soldiers appears as certainly untrue, the result of an unchecked rumor, which it seems that Ly Bun Heng, with his good relations to the village chief, could have verified, and which had apparently not spread to the "three desirable daughters" of the man whom Ly had to persuade to

join him in flight.63 A third story which we now know to be untrue, and which at some point in the chain of transmission to B/P involved an outright lie, was of the new wave of executions ordered in October 1975 and picked up by the “radio monitors of several nations.” The actual order then issued, and which presumably the monitors did pick up, was in fact to stop executions at local initiative. B/P’s quaint footnote on this is:

“This information was obtained confidentially from three different foreign intelligence agencies” (and missed by the CIA?).64

A final example of B/P’s biased reporting concerns the exodus from Phnom Penh to the south in April 1975, and the ‘second exodus’ from the south to the northwest. The story of the first is presented through the experiences of an impressionable, pampered 14-year-old girl of a wealthy family, - who had apparently never known any life but “a splendid white villa,” “a cultured home,” and “education at the French Lycee Descartes,” even in 1974-75 when much of Phnom Penh was already living in misery and close to starvation, In general, people of less sheltered background, even real Phnom Penh urbanites, do not remember that southward move as a time of horror.65

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Of course, such bias is only to be expected from the Reader's Digest, whose sympathy for the tribulations of established elites faced with popular effervescence is well known.

Ponchaud, however, is a different matter. He claims to be of peasant origin and to have a long-standing sympathy for the peasants of Cambodia,66 and he might argue that his critique of the DK regime was based on its unpleasant consequences for the Cambodian peasantry as well as for the townspeople.

His cited witnesses, though, like B/P's, are overwhelmingly urban, and their testimony complains, not of damage to peasant life and agriculture, but of their own sufferings inflicted by a vengeful peasantry - only one of them was able to note that the peasants had suffered badly from the war, in particular bombing.67 Ponchaud's bias, even if unconscious, is shown by the circumstance that - unlike B/P - he was well aware of all that was happening in Cambodia from 1970 and even before, yet he chose to write his book, not when peasant life was being torn apart by bombs, shells, and raids directed from the city,68 but only after the peasantry had taken power and had begun to educate the city to the demands of peasant life under emergency conditions, and probably to exact vengeance as well.

Ponchaud tells us that he "mistrusted those who spoke French, and those who came from the wealthier classes," and that he was "mainly interested in the ordinary people … who could neither read nor write nor analyze what they had seen but whose illiterate memories could supply exact details."

Nevertheless, of the 94 refugees whose written accounts formed the basis of his book, Ponchaud lists 63 by occupation and of those, 52 were apparently town dwellers, and 42 definitely of elite status. The elite nature of his information is even more apparent among the 20 informants whom he names and who provided the most important evidence. Four of them were teachers or students, 3 doctors or pharmacists, 4 technicians, 2 businessmen, 1 court clerk, 4 military, and the remaining 2 unidentified by occupation.69 Naturally, almost the entire body of their testimony concerns the fate of the urban evacuees, not the peasants in whom Ponchaud claims special interest. This is not entirely Ponchaud's fault; it lies in the nature of the sources, but he should have noticed it and warned his readers.

Such contradictions are strange from someone who claims, "I am an exegete by training and profession … accustomed to apply the methods of source criticism to a body of reported events in order to elicit the historical truth from them." His exegetical talents could have been profitably exercised in a re-reading of the above description of his method, and of certain other sections of his book. For example he writes, "all refugees complain of the relentless, goading nature of the work," in which "no effort was made to spare (the human organism] and it was never given a day of rest." But just a few pages earlier a pharmacist and his friend found that "since we weren't very strong physically, the village chief sent us to work with the women's group," and they were well treated; while other evidence indicated that "during … May 1975 people were apparently not forced to work."70 Inanother instance Ponchaud writes that "after a lengthy

term in prison," a doctor was sent back to the fields, but in the following paragraph reports that "in Kampuchea there are no camps or prisons," only the death sentence; and this is soon followed by a detailed description of another doctor's experience in some camps and prisons for intellectuals whom the regime apparently wished to reintegrate into special work.71

In spite of this, Ponchaud's book is not blatant propaganda like that of B/P, and the factual errors or misinterpretations could have been made honestly. There are even flashes of unexpected information which disagree with the general picture; thus, "there was nothing very brutal about this first deportation," or the story of a Phnom Penh man who received decent treatment in a Communist village in Kompong Cham province.72

In general, then, Barron, Paul and Ponchaud present the experience of the middle and upper strata of the towns as the members of those strata perceived it, suddenly and unpleasantly jolted from their usual existence and transplanted to the rigors of rice-field, forest and dam site. It was a case which was particularly easy to draw up since the refugees, then the only eyewitness informants about Cambodia, were overwhelmingly urban, to the extent of 70-80% of the total in the main camps in Thailand in 1979-81.73

Of course, their reports could have been handled with greater rigor than was attempted by B/P or Ponchaud, but even in the best of analytical circumstances there was an inherent bias in the raw evidence available to all researchers, since the main sources of

information were unfriendly witnesses both for the history of DK and for the study of the ensuing PRK period.

The STV as propagated by B/P, Ponchaud, and the popular press was questioned as early as 1975, and by some people who were experienced observers of Cambodian affairs. Their doubt was based in part on ideological preconceptions which have in general turned out to be mistaken, exemplified by the naive use of official DK statements as accurate reportage by Porter and Hildebrand and the lyrical treatment of 'News from Kampuchea' by the publication of that name in Australia.74 Their views were also, however, based in part on eyewitness experiences which contradicted the STV but which were ignored by its purveyors.

Thus there were reports that the exodus from Phnom Penh had been carried out slowly and without brutality, which together with credible descriptions of the supply and service situation in Phnom Penh could give an impression of a certain rationality rather than mere blind fanaticism. Some refugees related that they had been kept in Phnom Penh to work in hospitals, which contrasted with reports of all hospitals being brutally evacuated. There were also people who came out during 1975-76, and who had seen no murders or brutalities and were astonished by such stories when they reached Thailand. Similarly, one of the refugees found on arrival in the free world that normal western factory work discipline was more fatiguing than the forced labor in Cambodia. In the same camps where Barron and Paul collected their horror stories there were, in 1975-76, people who had not had such experiences, and who had left

simply because they had not wanted to do field work, or because they already had families abroad.75

Within the STV literature itself, one occasionally found serious contradictions. Thus Ponchaud related, along with a description of the destruction of religion, the story of a wounded survivor of a mass execution of Lon Nol officers who took refuge for several months in one of the principal temples of the town of Battambang until he was well, which implies that the temple functioned, with food still supplied by the faithful, and a large enough complement of monks to keep a wounded stranger hidden from the authorities.76 Ponchaud also included other non-STV reports in his book, but integrated them into the story in a way which obscured their significance.77

The stories which were relatively positive, or inconsistent with the STV, were generally ignored by the mainstream press and relegated to obscure leftist or intellectual publications; and only through the efforts of writers like Noam Chomsky have they been able to reach a wider public.78 Even if the ideological commitment of those who supported DK could be as distorting as that of B/P or Ponchaud, and their version of the revolution as lacking in objectivity, they had, in 1975-76, real evidence for their point of view and were trying to exhibit a degree of sympathy and understanding for a country which had been reduced to a primitive political and social level by one of the most destructive wars of modern times. Even if the picture they tried to draw were totally inaccurate, it would be innocuous, for their views had virtually no effect on the public. Anything written about Communist atrocities, however unhistorical, uncritical, or dishonest,

was immediately taken up by the press, pushed through large printings, excerpted and reviewed, and taken as authoritative even if its author, like Ponchaud, was completely unknown and devoid of scholarly or journalistic credentials.

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Writers on the other side, who took a sympathetic view of the revolution and its difficulties, had little chance of a hearing, and when the purveyors of the STV took notice of their work at all it was to villify the authors rather than to examine and discuss the evidence.79

There is thus no intention in this review of sources and evidence to equate the errors of those two points of view. The more serious of the latter group, continuing their efforts to understand and explain the Cambodian situation, have recognized the defects in their earlier treatment, tried to deepen their understanding, and have offered assessment of and support for new solutions which seem to be of benefit for Cambodia and its people. Some of the more prominent of the first group, however, in their support for a new anti-PRK STV which is clearly even less honest than the earlier one, have shown that their concern was and still is political propaganda rather than an understanding of Cambodia.80

The accumulated evidence about DK indicates that even if true-believer enthusiasm for the Cambodian revolution was misplaced, the serious criticism of the STV in 1975-76 was reasonable and largely correct. It is also true that throughout 1977-78 evidence supporting a picture like that presented by B/P and Ponchaud increased and was apparently confirmed at last by the evidence from Vietnam, a once fraternal Communist regime, which in publicizing the conflicts erupting with Cambodia recounted horrors the equal of any found in the Western press during the previous 2-3 years.

There could hardly any longer be serious doubt that the DK regime, however it started out, had become something very much like that depicted in the STV. We know now, however, that it was not just an increase in evidence about an already existing situation, but that things really changed in 1977.

In 1975-76 the STV was simply not a true picture of the country, and conditions could reasonably be explained as inevitable results of wartime destruction and disorganization.

From 1977, on the other hand, DK chose to engage in policies which caused increasing and unnecessary hardship. Thus the evidence for 1977-78 does not retrospectively justify the STV in 1975-76, and the Vietnamese adoption of some of the worst Western propaganda stories as support for their case in 1979 does not prove that those stories were valid.81

Such distinctions were not yet clear at the time, however, and the increasing evidence for the STV threw the foreign defenders of revolutionary Cambodia into disarray. Some decided they had been wrong and lost interest in Cambodia; others admitted they had been wrong, and accepted the STV for the DK period but began to engage in detailed analysis of DK to explain why it turned out as it did and to show that such a development was not necessarily inherent in the beginning; still others maintain that the STV is only partially true and continue to insist that 1975-79 was a period of real positive achievements. The last group, in contrast to the others, tend to reject the PRK solution and to accept uncritically the STV for 1979-80. Among the analysts of events of 1975-81 we also find an important difference in that some see the evil aspects of the DK regime developing gradually out of ideological and policy conflicts among different factions, while others assert that the STV, to the extent that it is true, was accurate from the very beginning, and that those of us who doubted the STV reports in 1975-76 were wrong.

In this way a few intellectuals of the far left find themselves in the same camp as Ponchaud. For them the conflicts which eviscerated the Front'82 were simple power struggles among individuals and cliques, an explanation which smacks more of mainline American political science than the Marxist intellectual currents with which they otherwise wish to identify.

By the end of 1978, then, the STV had been generally accepted - by the defenders of the regime to their dismay, and by all reactionary

forces, anti-communist propagandists and sensation-hungry journalists to their delight.

The destruction of a regime so evil should have pleased both groups, and they should have been even more delighted when the increasing exodus of refugees in the months following the destruction of the DK administration showed decisively that the STV needed modification with respect to the groups which were thought to have been exterminated. As a European businessman with wide contacts in Phnom Penh before 1975 put it, there was a sudden arrival at the border of all sorts of old acquaintances presumed dead - businessmen, bankers, professionals, military officers - who could not all have been overlooked had there been a general policy to exterminate them.83

Another such example was the flight to Thailand of over a dozen members of the Aphaivong family, descendants of the eighteenth-nineteenth century hereditary governors of Battambang who had brought that rich province under Thai hegemony, and some of whom after its retrocession to Cambodia in 1907 had continued to play important roles in Thai government and politics as well as being active in Thai irredentist efforts in the 1940s. Because of their background those who remained in Cambodia kept a low profile politically, but maintained their position as wealthy landlords in Battambang.4 To the DK cadres they would have been doubly inimical - as traditional allies of a hereditary foreign enemy, and as an example par excellence of an exploiting class. Yet they survived.

Similar doubts were evoked by the first news I had of old acquaintances who had not been heard from since April 1975. In February 1980 I received word that a family I had known since the 1960s was in the refugee center of Khao I Dang, and that all members who had been alive in 1975 had survived and were in good health - that is, 20 people including a woman of about 65 who for years before 1975 had suffered from severe respiratory complaints; her three unusually attractive daughters with their husbands, a schoolteacher and two former Lon Nol soldiers, one a Cham; her son with his wife; and the children of the four couples. Besides that, all of the younger women had borne children during the DK years with only one infant death, a statistic which would not have been unusual in the best days of pre-war Cambodia; and one of the surviving children had been in delicate health before 1975.

Moreover the family had for years before 1975 had close relations with foreigners, a circumstance well known in the area where they lived and where they remained throughout most of the DK period. Was this a unique case? Did it just happen against all odds that such a group of unexpected survivors were friends of a Cambodia scholar who had since 1975 expressed doubts about the STV and who would be sensitive to evidence controverting it? Was the experience of one of the more sensationalist newsmen - that all families he had encountered had lost at least six members - more typical?85

During five months visiting and working in the refugee camps, I became convinced that my friends were not a unique case, although they were in a minority, in their region, as a large family group which

had lost no one through illness, starvation, or execution. I did, however, meet other similarly intact families; and, even if they lost one or more members over what would have been expected in the given time period, Khao I Dang was largely populated by families, not isolated adult survivors or orphans.86

The overall demographic picture of the main refugee holding center, and the objective experiences of many family groups and individuals, thus argues against certain aspects of the STV. This is not, however, the way the refugees see it. What I have called the STV is their STV, what they wish to believe, which they are eager to convey to all who will listen, but which can be penetrated and analyzed by careful questioning and listening.

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The family which I cited above, for example, although aware of my interests and used to my questions for ten years before 1975, at first said - they didn't want to talk about 1975-79 at all because it had been too horrible. Eventually, however, it turned out that some of them had always had adequate food and had often been able to help those in poorer circumstances; they had never been separated to an extent that complete contact was lost; the children remained with some member of the family; the two persons who had come close to physical danger had been fairly judged; and in 1977-78, the generally

worst years for atrocities against ‘new people,’ two of them, one man and one woman, were given privileged village-level positions because of their education, which was needed to carry out administrative tasks. Finally, as soon as the constraints of the DK regime had been removed in early 1979, they were in good enough health, in spite of the poor rations of the previous three years, for three of the young men to be able to leave their families and set off on bicycles to see Phnom Penh, just for a lark and to inform themselves on the situation in other parts of the country. Following this they began to engage in trading with the Thai border area, and by the time they decided to become refugees they had accumulated several thousand Thai baht (1 baht = $0.05).

There are thus numerous details which controvert the STV, which is not to say that all horror stories are fiction.

I am convinced that all the worst atrocities which have been reported occurred at some place at some time, but not as the STV would have it, everywhere all the time. To get a more accurate account behind the STV requires careful questioning and in particular careful listening as people become loquacious and free-associate, for some of the more interesting details come out accidentally and unexpectedly.87

Undoubtedly some readers will ask, why bother? By any account the years 1975-79 were a terrible period and even the survivors suffered miserably. What is the point of prodding them to reveal exculpatory aspects of the regime which tormented them, and in the process

insinuate that they may be lying? Such is indeed the attitude of the refugees themselves - if one accepts that DK was bad, as I do, there is no point in analyzing it further or relativizing its evil. They were bad people who did bad things, and that was that. It is a question which merits an answer.

First, as an historian, one of whose special areas is Cambodia, it is incumbent on me, if I choose to write about it at all, to search for as much of the entire truth as possible, wherever that may lead. A chronicler, or journalist, may simply repeat stories as they are handed to him, even when he knows they may be less than honest,88 but an historian may not. If he thinks they are less than honest, or incomplete, or imply certain things not expressly stated, it is his duty to draw out these aspects, break down the stories, reorder their details, and fit them into wider contexts.

One of the wider contexts which is, I believe, objectively important,whatever one's subjective feelings about what is legitimate in social change, is the situation of the Cambodian revolution with respect to the widespread social and economic changes taking place all over the world, and in particular in Asia.

How does it compare with other revolutions, or with non-revolutions? Was it Communist or not? Was it entirely aberrant, one of a kind, or did it develop logically out of certain preconditions which may be repeated elsewhere?89 To even begin to answer any of these questions we should try to discover what happened in Cambodia

place by place, year by year (or even month by month), and for what immediate reasons.

As an example, let us take one of the matters which arises in most STV stories, the numbers of excessive deaths from executions or unnecessary starvation. Total estimates have ranged all the way from the tens of thousands to 3 million; and those who have tried to analyze the data have been accused of useless playing with figures, such as arguing about how many Jews the Nazis killed,

This analogy is instructive. As we shall see, some of the STV estimates must be reduced by factors of from 10 to 50; and if the same were true of Jewish deaths, that is, if in 1945 it had been discovered that 600,000, rather than 6 million, had lost their lives and no records were available about Nazi policies, we would not have a holocaust, and would not even be able to infer a massacre of Jews as such, but rather random, if large-scale, killings of Poles, Czechs, Rumanians, Russians, or Yugoslavs, in short an historically quite different phenomenon.

There is thus no need to apologize for attempting a close reading of the refugee stories in order to penetrate past the STV, particularly now that certain quarters, which three or four years ago were pushing the STV onto the public in order to discredit DK Cambodia, have decided that Pol Pot may be useful and have begun their own exculpatory, but dishonest, cuts in the horror picture in order to switch attention elsewhere.90

By early 1980 at the latest, the presence of several hundred thousand mainly middle-class survivors in the border camps and holding centers was good evidence that the STV conditions could not have prevailed everywhere throughout the entire DK period. As one method of penetrating the blanket affirmation of the STV which the physical survival of many of its proponents belied, I decided to ask individuals to relate what had happened to them, personally, and what they had seen, in chronological order, since April 17, 1975.

This did produce some fearsome stories in conformity with the standard total view, in particular the story of the extended family of one of my close friends, all of whom perished except an elderly woman with several young nieces in KID, and a former teacher, now in his forties, working for the new government in Phnom Penh. They represent one of the authentic tragedies - neither exploiters, nor corrupt, nor Lon Nol military, fate placed them all in places where they could not avoid extermination; from the head of the family, a retired official of the highest rank who loyally responded to the revolutionaries' call for cooperation on April 17, through several middle-level technocrats, and my friend, a teacher, who, crazed with hunger and illness in one of the worst areas of Battambang, wandered into the woods and was shot as a bandit, to several families of prosperous peasants.

An equally tragic story in personal terms, but instructive for modifications of the STV, is that of Pin Yathay, published as L'Utopie Meurtrière.91

He lost all his family, mainly through illness, in one of the worst, if not the worst, district of the whole country; but until the very end the family lived together, compassion was shown by DK cadres at moments of family tragedy, Yathay was several times praised for his work effort, and he was able to carry sufficient cash and other valuables out of Phnom Penh to supplement the family's rations for over two years. Many other stories were in startling contrast to the above. I met people who had not known serious hunger, although they may not have eaten as well as in prewar Phnom Penh. One woman, a prewar schoolteacher, told me that even under the Communist regime she had been put to work teaching primary classes, something which even many skeptics of the STV would have thought impossible. "But," said some listeners to our conversation, "that was in Damban (region) 3 where it was different," and for the first time I heard a specific indication that conditions had varied enormously in different parts of the country.92

Contrary to the statements that all educated people had to hide their literacy to avoid trouble, I found several.others who had been given special, privileged tasks because of education beyond that of the cadres. For example, a girl who had been a student in the next-to-last year of high school and who in April 1975 had admitted the fact was given a crash course in administering injections and turned into a medical worker for one year, a testimony also relevant for the question of DK destruction of medicine.93 Other such examples were a teacher whose status was known and who was called in from field work every year to prepare the statistical report for the district

of Monkolborei, and several persons who were given minor administrative posts where literacy and numeracy were required.

Still other refugees stated, from their own experience, that the only status which in itself carried mortal danger was membership in the Lon Nol military or police organizations. According to them teachers, doctors, engineers, etc., knew that if they otherwise performed well, those backgrounds did not endanger them.

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In virtually every personal account of 1975-79 there came a point at which the person said, “then I got sick and had to spend 2 days (or 2 weeks, or a month) in the hospital.” “What hospital, hadn’t medicine been abolished?” “Well, not exactly,” would be the answer, “but of course it wasn’t real medicine like we had before and it wasn’t any good.”

Nevertheless, it turned out that nearly everywhere, at all levels of the administration, there was a place set aside for medical care to which sick people could go and at least rest, and which in some places provided genuine modern medicine and competent surgery.

As for executions, the first response was always yes, they had “seen” or at least “knew of” many, but on closer examination there are

nuances in the stories. In Pin Yathay's account - and, it should be emphasized, in one of the worst areas - the executions of which he had direct knowledge were few in number. One man I interviewed, a teacher who took great pains to recall accurate data, said that he had direct knowledge of only 5 executions, three of whom had been secret police agents of the Lon Nol government - but again, he had been in Damban 3. A young woman from Damban 4, a much worse part of Battambang, thought hard and remembered having seen one killing; and in telling the story revealed something which she and her friends had the day before denied - that there were regular distributions of fish as well as the basic ration of rice.

Not all relations between DK cadres and 'new people' were bad, as Pin Yathay's story shows.94 The same young woman and her friend said they didn't consider any of the cadres whom they knew personally to have been "bad people"; and she proved the sincerity of her statement one day in August 1980 by rushing around the KID camp to find me in order to report that two of the former cadres from her village had just been moved from Sakeo to KID and she wanted me to meet them. Indeed their reunion was that of old friends.

That situation was, no doubt, exceptional, but it was not unique. The woman, who had worked as a teacher, and her husband, a dentist, one day asked me to take a letter to someone in Sakeo. It turned out that it was their old DK village chief, a pleasant man in his 50s, a peasant and long-term communist supporter, who had been kind to them during the difficult years. Although, since they were in different camps, I witnessed no friendly reunion, I served as mailman for them

and it was clear that each party remembered the other with some affection.

With respect to general control and work discipline, another chance conversation revealed interesting nuances. I had mentioned to some of the refugees in KID that several people had come out of Cambodia saying they knew of no massacres, and that working conditions were tolerable. I was immediately asked when such people left Cambodia. “In 1975-76,” I answered. “Well, that explains it. At that time things were very ‘loose’ around Battambang. It was easy to move around, work discipline was lax, people could look for their own food, and except for Lon Nol officers there wasn’t much killing” - statements which might not have been made in response to a direct question about living conditions in 1975-76; and I thus by chance found out that in parts of the northwest, life had not become unbearable until the second half of 1976.95

The same sort of unexpected details appeared in conversations about the PRK period. When I would point out that derogatory information about the new government was exaggerated, that they allowed much personal freedom, and engaged in no massacres, my informants would say, “yes, but in the beginning (1975-76) the other communists (DK) were easygoing too, and then they got worse” - another removed in the facade of the STV for all times and places.

Even investigation of the DK people at their worst, when killing, shows important variations in time and place. Many people who claimed to have seen or known of “many” killings, when pressed for

details reported the special events of 1978.% That is, in their part of the country, killings had been few and selective until that time. Another man, in whom I was at first not much interested since I had already met many people from his area of the country, mentioned offhandedly that he was the sole survivor of a group of 12 acquaintances who had gone from Phnom Penh to the northwest after 1975. I asked why the others had been killed. "Oh, they were corrupt. We had all been appointed as village chiefs by the Communists, and they used their positions to squeeze gold, jewels and money out of the people under them."97 This put a new dimension on certain executions and revealed another unexpected instance of DK trying to use educated people in administrative positions.

Occasionally, apparently reliable accounts contain clear contradictions which emphasize the great care necessary in analysis of information about DK. It was with great interest that I read of an eyewitness report that Ly Vu Ong, former Dean of the Faculty of Archeology, had been killed immediately after leaving Phnom Penh in April 1975.98 My interest was because I had known Ly Vu Ong, and because in 1980, in KID, I had met his wife, who told me that he had been killed in 1977 for having kept a secret diary of their experiences.

Similarly, Wilfred Burchett could cite without comment a statement that “Children [implicitly of all population categories] of 13 to 14 years were conscripted into the army,” and another report that “youth of the ‘new’ urban evacuees were not eligible for … enlistment in the

armed forces, even if they volunteered." The latter is correct, as confirmed by refugees I met in Thailand in 1980.99

One more such contradiction concerns a crocodile breeding farm established by the DK authorities in the center of Siemreap. According to Burchett's informants, "evidence was given of young children having been fed to crocodiles" there, and Burchett met people who claimed to have been witnesses.100 In August 1981, while on a visit to Siemreap, Serge Thion and I went alone, without a guide, on a tour around the center of Siemreap and came upon the crocodile farm, about which we had not yet heard. Thinking that it would have been a perfect place for DK sadism, or subsequent stories of such, I began talking to the caretaker, gradually leading up to the subject by asking how the animals were cared for and fed. I finally asked if they ate humans, a question he obviously considered silly, answering, "of course, if they could reach any." I then asked if they had ever been fed humans during DK times, at which he looked at me in real astonishment and said, "no."

Later our guide was quite upset that Thion and I had toured Siemreap alone, and was particularly infuriated that we had visited the crocodile farm, saying "did you know that they fed children to those crocodiles under Pol Pot?"

Apparently we had missed part of the standard propaganda treatment, by saying which, however, I do not wish to claim that no DK sadist ever pushed a person into a crocodile pit.

In brief, then, the STV as a complete picture is not true; and an accurate description of Cambodia requires that one penetrate beyond it. Parts of it are belied by the very existence of the people whose stories have formed it.

Other parts are contradictory and require further questioning to determine more precisely time, place and circumstance. With respect to the post-January 1979 period, the STV may be more easily checked against other information from within Cambodia, which shows that some people are guilty of straight fabrication and damages their credibility for the earlier period as well.

Nevertheless, the experiences noted briefly above, and the entire content of chapter 3 below on the DK years, show that whatever the refugees feel about the STV, they easily provide information which is inconsistent with it, and their own analyses of differences in time and place were very helpful in developing the point of view presented here. Often they were fully aware that the story they were telling me of their personal experiences was not at all congruent with the STV which they would like to believe about DK, and manifested laudable objectivity about those experiences which even in the best circumstances were very painful.

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Their ability to be objective, particularly when questioned carefully, proves that the inaccuracies which have pervaded the STV presented in the mainstream Western press owe more to the writers than to their sources.

The media treatment of DK was not inaccurate just because some of the refugees were incapable of accuracy or were liars, but because the journalists responsible for publicizing the STV selected the information most suitable for sensational publicity and ignored the rest. Or when the rest could not be ignored, an explanation was devised to circumvent it, as when Jean Lacouture affirmed that "in certain cases the ‘witnesses’ [inverted commas mine] refused to provide the worst … because as Cambodian patriots they felt some disgust in spreading ignominious details in front of the public … " The same theme appeared in a letter to the Far Eastern Economic Review from some “concerned correspondents” who wrote that “[The refugees’] stories did not come tumbling out … on the contrary, the interviews were an exasperating exercise.”

Such disingenuous statements are designed to cover their authors’ bias. Certainly during both my brief visit to the first refugee camp in Aranyaprathet in 1975 and the five months I worked among refugees in 1980 I saw no evidence of reluctance to tell the worst atrocity stories.

On the contrary, those who appeared reluctant to talk, particularly in 1975, were those whose own experiences really were in contradiction to the STV.101

That the refugee information as a whole - and not denying the truth of any particular story - is indeed an ‘STV’ rather than a careful descriptive account, is shown by the subtle modification which began to creep in already in 1980. The general tenor of the modification, apparent in KID, and more particularly in the Khmer Serei camp at Nong Samet, was a gradual increase in anti-Vietnamese attitudes and anti-Vietnamese ‘atrocity’ stories together with a toning down of the STV of the previous regime. Thus a camp officer at Nong Samet, in a conversation about the possibility of an anti-Phnom Penh alliance with the rump DK forces on the border said they were no longer emphasizing DK atrocities in the interest of a campaign against the PRK and the Vietnamese. Likewise, when an employee of the KID handicraft shop was telling me about the necessity to unite in the struggle against Vietnam, I pointed to some drawings of DK crimes which were displayed for sale, asking if there wasn’t a danger of Pol Pot’s return in the anti-Vietnam movement.

His somewhat embarrassed response was that "those things should not be given so much attention now."102

That tendency to overlook DK’s misdeeds may be the strongest among Khmer intellectuals who have been abroad since before 1975. In 1980 a Khmer demographer, whose own wife returned to Cambodia in 1976 and disappeared, published an article tending to minimize DK deaths and to blame Vietnam for the country’s misfortunes. Another young intellectual, whose entire family

including wife and child seem to have disappeared, argued that DK must have had a good economy or they could not have exported rice, and must have fed people enough, or they could not have produced anything. He was also willing to insist that only real traitors were executed, even if numbers might have been as high as 20,000; and when asked about the fate of his own family he replied that they could have died of “natural causes.” In any case, he thought all that must be put aside in the interest of an anti-Vietnamese struggle.103

The gradual shift from an anti-DK to an anti-PRK STV is not confined to Cambodians in the refugee camps or resident abroad. It is a major component in the foreign efforts to whip together an anti-PRK coalition, and was an important feature, albeit disguised, of a CIA report on Cambodian demography published in early 1980.104

Related to this have been interesting shifts in journalistic coverage.

These include emphasis in some media on anti-Vietnamese stories and even uncritical repetition of assertions that the Vietnamese occupation might be worse than DK.105 That position could not long be maintained by anyone but an abject propagandist, and has gradually been abandoned; and a new controversy has been generated over the original STV and the way it was presented to the public. William Shawcross, for example, has argued that portrayals of an STV-type situation were correct, that DK atrocities were comparable to Nazi treatment of Jews; and he severely criticizes those who wrote skeptically of them before 1979. He also asserts that there was not in 1975-79 “a massive let alone coordinated

campaign against the Khmer Rouge," that in fact there was too much doubting of the refugee stories among journalists. Among the few people who did a proper job were Barron and Paul, about whose treatment of their material Shawcross could find no stronger criticism than that Paul's research "was dressed up in unattractive and historically inaccurate propaganda" without that author's participation. Shawcross himself also saw the truth. He visited refugees on the Thai border in December 1975 and published a story in FEER after being convinced by "both middle class people from Phnom Penh and peasants" that "they were telling the truth."106

It is clear now that criticism of negligence by the Western press in recognizing DK atrocities would not be accepted by the former, since a similar remark by the editor of FEER in December 1981 brought stinging rebukes from Bangkok-based journalists who asserted that "it was the Western press which exposed Pol Pot," and who offered to prove it with "a thick file of news clippings dating back to May 1975."107

The Review accepted their assertion of diligence, but not their allegation of its own negligence and superficiality in coverage of Cambodia, and the editor appended a list of articles which were to demonstrate that FEER had in fact covered DK and its atrocities over the years. It is instructive to examine what he considered good coverage. The first article mentioned was "an exclusive interview with Nouth Choeum … Sihanouk's aide, which gave the first inside account of the atrocities," on October 24, 1975.108

In fact, since Choeum had been outside of Cambodia after 1970, he could in no way have given an “inside account” of DK’s beginning; and he provided no information about atrocities at all, beyond the already well-known fact that Phnom Penh had been evacuated, and that the friends and families of Sihanouk’s Peking entourage had been dispersed into the rural areas along with everyone else. Most of the content of his interview was gossipy conversation about life among Cambodian royalty in exile, the queen’s death, and the maneuvers surrounding Sihanouk’s return to Cambodia, interspersed with such gems as “everyone knew, 80% of the [April 1975] victory came from his [Sihanouk’s] tireless activity,” the “Red Khmers are cowardly and hypocritical,” and a complaint that when the queen died on April 28, 1975 Phnom Penh radio continued to broadcast revolutionary music instead of "religious music which was called for under royal protocol [which] proved that Phnom Penh leaders did not really like the Cambodian monarchy."109

The only substantive information about the new DK which Nouth Choeum offered concerned factions within the Cambodian revolutionary leadership, nearly all of which proved incorrect. As a source of new information he was extremely disappointing and so was FEER’s treatment of him, in particular their failure to probe for detailed information about factional leadership which he might have possessed and which would have been of value to serious students of the country. Derek Davies was certainly correct to claim “due immodesty” when including that story as part of the Review’s “unrivalled” coverage of Indochina.

Davies next specified William Shawcross' article of January 1976, written soon after Shawcross had travelled to the Thai-Cambodian border and visited the refugee camps.

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For Davies' purpose it is also less than impressive. Shawcross started off by reporting that refugee accounts "suggest (my emphasis] that the Khmer Rouge is finding it hard to govern the country except by coercion" and "even suggest that terror is being employed as a system of government." Farther on, after some description of the Indochina refugee situation, he noted that the refugees "did not appear to be in a sorry condition," even though they complained of "rigour and hardship," "pain of working in the field all day with only a cup or so of rice to eat," of "young and old … dying of starvation," and "of the fear in which the Khmer Rouge are held." Then after devoting a longer space to non-atrocity information about the new system, Shawcross questioned how the Khmer Rouge could rule with such a low ratio of soldiers to people; and he repeated the refugee answer that everyone was cowed by fear of execution, even though his informants often did not know of any occasion on which the alleged executions had taken place. Although convinced that "the life of ordinary people today really is appalling," Shawcross agreed that "it is impossible, on the basis of talking to some refugees and reading the radio monitoring, to say how a country is being run"; and

he ended with a reminder that if an “atrocity” [emphasis by Shawcross] -was being perpetuated as “Henry Kissinger has, on several occasions since April [1975] lamented, … Kissinger must bear some measure of responsibility” since “the atrocity did not begin in April - it simply entered its sixth year.”

For a careful reader Shawcross’ article did not present the expose of DK terror which Derek Davies now wishes to make of it. It was a careful assessment of refugee accounts and some of the evidence which might force their modification, together with a reminder that however hard life was in Cambodia, the new authorities might have been faced with a situation in which there was little choice.110

It is difficult to understand why Shawcross now wishes to efface his earlier good judgment and claim to have been a purveyor of a sensationalist STV when he clearly was not; and in one respect he even seems to have moved full circle from implacable critic of Kissinger to collaborator in the latter’s strictures against the American left.

While Kissinger alleges some degree of “responsibility” for what happened in Cambodia of “those.whose pressures rigidly restricted American assistance to Cambodia … who finally succeeded in throttling all aid to a still resisting country in 1975,” and writes of “antiwar critics who made the collapse of Indochina inevitable,” Shawcross chimes in with "the ‘scepticism’ … displayed by the western left toward what was going on in Cambodia [1975-79] is one

of the principal reasons why an international campaign … was never mounted on behalf of the Khmers."111

No more impressive was another article mentioned by Davies, Donald Wise's of September 23, 1977, "on the liquidation of intellectuals and professionals." He merely repeated the more extreme STV allegations, referred to Barron and Paul as a source, and cited one new informant of his own who apparently gave him the standard charges of liquidation of nearly all intellectuals, adding that "Cambodia is governed by drunkards, thieves, savages, barbarians and classless illiterates." The man further damaged his case, in a way that Wise did not perceive, by reporting that "the normal ration per person is two condensed milk cans [500 grams] of dry rice a day," which would have been an adequate rice ration, and would have been regarded as a luxury by most residents of DK.112

FEER's big gun in the area of Cambodia reportage was of course Nayan Chanda, cited approvingly by Davies; and Chanda's work was indeed the most thoroughly researched and sensible of any journalist writing on that subject. But he, in particular, was extremely, and properly, circumspect on the question of atrocities.

In his article of October 26, 1976, he wrote that "most observers agree that the worst excesses of the reign of terror are over," that "large-scale executions have apparently stopped, although sporadic killings continue."

He added that “part of the killing was the action of the have-nots against the haves,” inspired by a desire for revenge, and effects of a savage war.

Moreover, he felt that the refugees, who were then coming mainly from isolated work sites in the three provinces bordering Thailand, "rarely have any information of value."113

As we shall see below, all of that agrees very well with information elicited from questioning a large number of refugees in 1980; and the “Concerned Correspondents” who seem to think Chanda misread the evidence in not realizing that worse was to come are off the mark. Worse purges did begin in 1977, but nothing can be inferred from them about 1975-76, since there was a change of policies almost tantamount to a change of regime. Refugee reminiscences from nearly all parts of the country concur in depicting the last months of 1975 and 1976, after the immediate post-war massacres of Lon Nol military had ended, as a rather tolerable period.

Again in October 1977, Chanda wrote “occasional executions continue, the refugees say,” a fair statement of the situation, since the purges about which refugees could have told Chanda at that time were affecting mainly cadres, not the ordinary population. Chanda also noted that Pol Pot considered 1-2%, or 80-160,000 people as enemies, and that “explains the sporadic executions which have continued to take place in Cambodia after the first rush of executions of top military and civilian officials in the summer of 1975,” again a

fair analysis of the available information which is still supported by the much larger body of evidence subsequently accumulated.114

Two other articles of Chanda's cited by Davies, of March 31 and April 21 "1977" [sic 1978] concerned Cambodian attacks on Vietnamese border areas, and even if they were extremely brutal they do not permit any inference about atrocities within Cambodia in 1975-77.

In the work of Nayan Chanda, then, the Review does have reason to be proud of its Cambodia coverage, though not of the hasty leaps into DK-bashing for which Davies now wishes to concede his critics' prescience. Interestingly, the latter now accept uncritically Vietnamese 'confirmation' of the conditions they had earlier alleged, although many of them are reluctant to believe what the Vietnamese have said about Cambodia since 1979. With the exception of what had happened on the Vietnamese border during Cambodian attacks, much of the information offered by the Vietnamese about Pol Pot's Cambodia had been culled from the more uncritical Western press reports, and whether true or not, can in no way be taken as confirmation of them.

As for the allegation of Vietnamese tardiness in recognizing DK excesses, one of the points to be made in the present study is that before 1977, the year in which Cambodian-Vietnamese conflict began in earnest, there were few excesses, that even in 1977 they were mostly in regions far from Vietnam and news of which would not easily get to that country, and that the zone about which Vietnam

would have had the best information, the East, was the least violent until 1978.

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If the “Concerned Correspondents” of Bangkok are really concerned about suppression of atrocity evidence, they should be addressing their critique to the CIA, whose report on “Kampuchean Demography” totally whitewashed the last, and by far greatest, massacre, the purge of the East beginning in May 1978.115

This competitive scramble among journalists to claim credit for atrocity mongering in which not all of them were engaged, rather than for the sober reporting which was to their credit, would be merely amusing if it did not illustrate the unfortunate circumstance that journalism has now become to such a large extent a branch of the entertainment industry with its practitioners forced to search for, or even invent, ever more sensational stories to hold the public’s attention.116

As an example of this need for exciting stories, it is instructive to note the manner in which the presence of a ‘self-confessed’ Communist mass murderer in Khao I Dang was ferreted out and sensationalized in a publication of international circulation. Unfortunately the wrong man was fingered.

Sometime in July 1980, while talking with the brilliant young Indochina scholar Larry Palmer in the American Embassy agents' house in Aranyaprathet, Larry mentioned to me that a man who allegedly admitted to having carried out a couple of hundred executions was said to have recently been transferred from the Sakeo refugee camp to Khao I Dang. Larry had not yet met him, but had heard the story from Rod Nordland of the Philadelphia Inquirer.

On July 20 I met Nordland, who admitted that the details of the story were not entirely clear because in his interview with the man, named Til Vin, he had been forced to use a chain of two interpreters, Khmer-Thai and Thai- English; and that in addition the chief of the camp section where Til Vin lived was present and kept 'interpreting' the latter's answers. But he believed the main fact, Vin's role as executioner, because another camp resident whom he had also interviewed with interpreters claimed to have witnessed his own son's death at Til Vin's hand. Nordland was nevertheless happy to go with me to talk to Vin without interpreters and try to tie up loose ends of the story.

Til Vin was a small, dark, grey-haired kindly looking man in his fifties, a peasant from Sneng in western Battambang, an old radical area where he himself had been part of the Communist movement since before 1970. I mentioned to him that I myself had once visited Sneng, in 1962 or '63, to look at the late Angkor-period temple on the main road going through town.

Then we got down to his ‘story,’ and I said I understood from Nordland, who was with me, that he admitted to killing a large number of people between 1975 and 1979.

He denied he had said any such thing; what he had said about killing was that a couple of hundred, mostly Lon Nol military, might have been killed in Sneng in the beginning, right after the Communist victory, but he hadn’t even been there since he had fled farther into the woods during the Lon Nol search and destroy operation in 1974 and had not returned to Sneng until 1977.

When he returned to Sneng in 1977 he had been one of the three-man executive committee of a cooperative, the next-to-lowest level of DK administration; and he claimed that in his area executions had been infrequent and the policy had been to use moral suasion and propaganda (kosang) against those who did not measure up to Communist standards. This statement fitted well with the picture I had already built up from refugee accounts of Damban 3, where Sneng was located, and added credence to his story.117 The only executions in which he admitted playing a role, as cooperative administrator rather than executioner, were two cases of couples killed for transgressing the regulations prohibiting sex outside marriage. When I left Nordland that afternoon we had decided the story needed a lot of further checking, first of all with the eyewitness, a man named Touch Khieu.

I found him a couple of days later. He was voluble and eager to tell his story. Yes, he had seen his son, a Lon Nol soldier, killed in Sneng

in 1975, and he knew that the killer, A-Vin ('A' being a pejorative prefix), had recently arrived in KID. "You mean Til Vin?" I asked. "No, not Til Vin, - Vin," he replied.118 There we had it. The chief witness was exonerating Til Vin. To make sure, I asked him to describe the killer. "Tall, fair-skinned, black-haired, but balding," on every point the physical opposite of Til Vin. He was also able to describe Til Vin, knew that he too was in KID, and remembered that he had come to Sneng in 1977 and had taken up a post on the cooperative committee. As for Til Vin's crimes, if any, Khieu remembered his involvement in "several" executions for 'moral turpitude,' precisely what Vin himself had acknowledged.

After this I looked up Nordland again, told him the results of my conversation with Touch Khieu, and he agreed that his original story would have to be reworked and that more research, particularly a meeting with the other Vin, was required.

I was therefore astonished to find Rod Nordland's original story, in the form of a "Letter from Khao I Dang," in FEER of August 8, accompanied by photographs of Til Vin and a friend, and signed by "Natalie Ane."119

I immediately wrote a letter to the editor, pointing out the facts outlined above and on which the testimony of the accused (Til Vin) was supported by the evidence of an eyewitness and next-of-kin (Touch Khieu) of the only identified victim. I may also have inadvertently let slip some remark about irresponsible, sensation-hunting journalists, because I soon received a letter from

Derek Davies himself dated August 13, 1980, in which he not only rejected my effort to have a rectification published in FEER, but in the excitement of the moment hastily accused me (the only person concerned who had spoken to the subjects of the story directly) of relying on hearsay against the 'facts' which had been obtained by his journalist through a double chain of translators aided by the interjections of a camp official. For him the story derived from those uncertain circumstances was 'fact,' while the mutually congruent stories of Til Vin and Touch Khieu, without benefit of intermediaries, were not.

When I returned to KID a couple of weeks later I investigated further and was informed that Nathalie Ane was a journalism student who had visited the border area and had accompanied some of the journalists, including Nordland, on their rounds. Til Vin remembered that Nordland had been accompanied by a woman, as did Tun [Tuon] Savy, another man who figures in Ane's story and who finally led me to meet -. Vin, the person whom Touch Khieu accused of his son's murder. The second Vin did not admit to murder either, which is only to be expected, but the important point is that both he and Savy, like Touch Khieu, agree that Til Vin, the man exposed to the world by the Review's excursus into sensationalist journalism, was not at the scene of the alleged crime.

It was impossible to discover the reasons for the mistaken implication of Til Vin, which was important since even if his hands were not clean and he willingly administered DK's absurd sexual policy, the executions in which he had some responsibility were few

and for an ‘offense’ clearly spelled out in advance and known to all, not en masse for wartime activities carried out under another regime. There could have been simple confusion of identity, deliberate false accusation for personal reasons, or a factional feud left over from DK days.

But the atmosphere of the refugee camps was the perfect hothouse for proliferation of all sorts of rumors, distorted reports and false stories which are dangerous ammunition in the hands of inexperienced or uncritical reporters.

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One more example of the thirst for sensational news about Cambodia demonstrates the embarrassing inaccuracies to which uncritical propagandizing can lead as well as the interesting circumstance that some ‘concerned’ organs of the press have moved from a search for DK atrocities to glorification of the DK forces as participants in a new struggle for the ‘liberation’ of their country. On December 20, 1981 the New York Times published a story by one Christopher Jones about his alleged visit to the DK-occupied zone near the Thai border where he observed military action against the Vietnamese.

The story has since been exposed as a total fraud, and only its sensationalist character can explain why the NYT would accept a story from an unknown writer on such a sensitive subject without having it checked by people familiar with the area, who could have spotted some of its faked details with no more than a cursory perusal.120

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### FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 2

1. Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER), March 28, 1975, pp. 11-12.

2. Ibid., August 1, 1975, p. 22; September 5, 1975, p. 22; June 25, 1976, p.26.

3. Ibid., October 24, 1975, pp. 8-10; May 7, 1976, pp. 22-23. The same mistaken view of the Cambodian left as puppets of Vietnam was also held by many Cambodians, such as Y Phandara, whose Retour à Phnom Penh describes how his return from Paris to Cambodia in 1978 was motivated by Pol Pot's speech of September 1977 and subsequent DK attacks on Vietnam which convinced him that the new government was really nationalist (see his pp. 19, 42, 44, 46).

4. There was of course the DK government's official news, mostly in radio broadcasts, but both friends and enemies could reasonably doubt its reliability.

5. Information gathered during visits to Aranyaprathet in 1976 and 1977.

6. "Thai Supreme Command Headquarters, Border Relief Operations," June 28, 1982, gave a figure of 35,000.

7. See chapter 4, below, passim.

8. This is derived from my own conversations with refugees during May-September 1980. See also Milton Osborne, "The Kampuchean Refugee Situation, a Survey and Commentary," report prepared for the United Nations High Command for Refugees (UNHCR), Bangkok, April 23, 1980.

9. Such messages could be sent via acquaintances in Thailand to the Khmer Serei camps on the border, and thence into Cambodia. Such clandestine mail routes continued to operate all through 1980-81, and still do.

10. Information from conversations with refugees in 1980.

11. It would be very interesting for a study of Thai and American policies, which are not being explored here.

12. See Osborne, "The Kampuchean Refugee Situation," pp. 54-55, for examples.

13. For an explanation of 'Issarak,' see above, chapter 1.

14. I am referring to the affair of January 28, 1977 in which 30 people were reported killed, at 1 .. st in an unprovoked DK incursion. Eventually it turned out that the incident was probably provoked by smuggling in the area, and in June-July three Thai were executed and others imprisoned for having provoked it. In spite of that, no light was shed on the responsibility for the killing, and there was even some doubt about the identity of the killers. The best attempt at a serious analysis is 'Larry Palmer,' "Thailand's Kampuchea Incidents," News from Kampuchea I, 4 (October 1977), pp. 1-31. In FEER February 11, 1977, pp. 8-10, Norman Peagam wrote of the incident, expressing doubt about DK involvement. Less than a month later he was expelled from Thailand (FEER, March 4, 1977, pp. 9-10).

15. FEER, December 7, 1979, p. 15.

16. Such are the figures given by survivors; but like all such estimates they are subject to caution. See also FEER, August 3, 1979, p. 19; August 17, 1979, p. 17; Asiaweek, June 22, 1979, pp. 12-13.

17. See Asiaweek, June 22, 1979, pp. 12-13; FEER, August 3, 1979, p. 19.

18. Asiaweek, June 22, 1979, pp. 12-13.

19. FEER, July 20, 1979, p. 39.

20. FEER, August 3, 1979, p. 19; August 17, 1979, p. 17.

21. FEER, September 7, 1979, p. 10.

22. Heder, "Occupation," chapter 4.

23. FEER, July 6, 1979, p. 18; November 2, 1979, pp. 12-13; November 9, 1979, p. 40.

24. FEER, September 21, 1979, p. 7; November 9, 1979, p. 40; September 28, 1979, p. 12, respectively.

25. FEER, November 2, 1979, pp. 12-13.

26. FEER, November 9, 1979, p. 29.

27. FEER, November 9, 1979, p. 42.

28. FEER, November 2, 1979, p. 13; November 9, 1979, p. 41.

29. Asiaweek, November 16, 1979, p. 46; UNHCR documents at KID.

30. Because the DK forces were establishing bases at Phnom Malai and Phnom Chhat. See Asiaweek, November 9, 1979, pp. 20-21;

November 16, p. 46; December 7, p. 35; FEER, November 9, p. 29; November 30, p. 15.

31. FEER, November 16, 1979, p. 25; Asiaweek, November 30, 1979, p. 16; FEER, December 7, 1979, pp. 5, 14; William Shaweross, "The End of Cambodia?" New York Review of Books, January 24, 1980, p. 25.

32. Conversations with UNHCR personnel at KID.

33. Totals of weekly arrivals may be found in Osborne, "The Kampuchean Refugee Situation," Table A.

34. Conversations with refugees who had been part of that first movement to KID. John Pilger, "America's Second War in Indochina," New Statesman, August 1, 1980, wrote that much of the refugee operation was a deliberate effort to draw off population and destabilize Cambodia and Vietnam. I believe he was generally correct but that evidence to justify as definite a statement as his is lacking and unlikely to be discovered.

35. Conversations with refugees and own observations during 1980. On freedom of movement in Cambodia see chapter 4, below.

36. In September 1981 a Foreign Ministry official in Phnom Penh told me that those who fled the country after January 1979 are of the lowest priority among Cambodians abroad whom the new government might wish to have return; but in September 1982

Foreign Minister Hun Sen stated that any Cambodians honestly abandoning the anti-Phnom Penh coalition would be able to return to vote and run in elections (FEER, March 3, 1983, p. 12).

37. Masato Matsushita, Kyodo News Service, and Stephen R. Heder, an 81-page typewritten collection of 43 interviews, many of them with former DK cadres at the refugee camp in Sakeo. Cited hereafter as "Heder Interviews," by interview number in the original.

38. For some statements of the STV in the international press, see Donald Wise, "Eradicating the Old Dandruff," FEER, September 23, 1977, pp. 32-37; Newsweek, January 23, 1978, pp. 6-7; Asiaweek, April 4, 1979, p. 17; Leopold Labedz, "Under Western Eyes," Encounter, February 1980, pp. 37, 44, 46; Sheldon Simon, "Kampuchea: Pawn in a Political Chess Match," Current History, December 1980, pp. 170-174. Thor Peng Leath, "La fuite devant l'occupation Vietnamienne," Les Temps Modernes, January 1980, contains good examples of the anti-Vietnamese STV. None of the above shows the complete range of STV statements.

39. See the stories of Ponchaud repeated in Shawcross, "The End of Cambodia?"

40. Ibid .; Heder, "Occupation."

41. Conversation with a former PRK Ministry of Education official who fled to KID in June 1980. Labedz, Encounter, February 1980, p. 46, retailed the rumor that the Vietnamese pursued their goal of

absorbing Cambodia by sending in tens of thousands of settlers. On education and Vietnamese language see chapter 4, below.

42. Ponchaud, Cambodia Year Zero, pp. 48, 49, 53, although in chapter 9 he realized the Khmers were in charge of their revolution; and the stories transmitted to Shawcross for his "The End of Cambodia?" For Paul see Asiaweek, May 25, 1979, p. 29.

43. I have not been able to recover the publication in which Gray's article appeared, nor its exact date; and Gray, who recalls having written on the subject, did not retain a copy. Kampuchean Chronicles was published by the National Federation of UNESCO Associations, Japan, 1980.

44. Kampuchean Chronicles, p. 5; Newsweek, April 28, 1980, pp. 22-23, which repeated "70 per cent ... focused on nightmares of the near past"; Bangkok Post, May 4, 1980, Section 2, p. 15.

45. Kampuchean Chronicles: violent scenes, pp. 24, 34, 40, 48, 52; quotation, pp. 20-21; death of family members, pp. 37, 54-55; on 'second exodus' see below, pp. 82-83.

46. Kampuchean Chronicles, pp. 58-59 and 6-7, respectively.

47. Kampuchean Chronicles, pp. 45, 50-51 (my emphasis), 19.

48. I wish to thank Jack Reynolds and Neil Davis for facilitating my examination of the drawings and showing me the final program.

49. Nong Samet is identifiable from the inclusion of the numerical designation '007,' given to the camp by its Khmer Serei inhabitants.

50. The issue may nevertheless be more complex. During my visit to KID in August 1982 Dr. Andres Martinez, a child psychiatrist who has worked for IRC in the refugee camps since 1979, informed me that the peaceful scenes do not necessarily mean tranquil memories, that psychologically traumatized children may draw such scenes to suppress painful recollections. While this makes conclusions about the real significance of the drawings more difficult, it does not excuse those who drew illegitimate inferences from what they depicted. The krama had always been an article of dress in rural Cambodia, but was worn with much individual variation, and did not assume a uniform character until adopted as such by the DK forces.

51. See. below, pp. 136-138 ..

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52. O. Mannoni, Prospero and Caliban (New York: Praeger, 1964), pp. 77-78, about Madagascar.

53. On monks, see below, pp. 179-180. Dr. Martinez (above, note 50) also provided interesting information on the question of influence, or priming, in the children's drawings. He said that in mid-1982 some

KID children were drawing pictures of U.S. troops invading Cambodia to destroy the Vietnamese.

54. Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, After the Cataclysm: Postwar Indochina and the Reconstruction of Imperial Ideology (Volume II of The Political Economy of Human Rights), p. 142.

55. Lucky hunches, rather than reasoned explanation and prediction, may make good journalism, but they are inadequate for historical or political analysis. No communist state has done what DK did; those who predicted revolutionary brutality before 1975 reasoned in part from the belief that the Cambodian revolutionaries were strongly influenced by the Vietnamese, and in chapter 5, below, I shall argue that the Cambodian revolution was not 'communist,' but belongs to another category which has often been regarded positively in the West.

56. Of course, many of Phnom Penh's inflated population were temporary refugees from rural areas, displaced by the war, but they, were nevertheless treated as enemies by the victors.

57. For another useful critique of these two books, see Chomsky and Herman, pp. 241-284.

58. Michael Vickery, "Democratic Kampuchea: CIA to the Rescue," Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars 14/4 (1982).

59. Barron and Paul, pp. 45-46.

60. For example, Miss So San, Kem Sos, and Gaffar Peangmit (Barron and Paul, pp. 6-7, 215), all of whom spent most of the 1960s, or earlier periods, in the U.S.

61. Barron and Paul, pp. 8-9; chapter 4; p. 172.

62. Barron and Paul, pp. 20-21, 41, 216; and see below, pp. 173-174.

63. Barron and Paul, pp. 95-100; and see below, pp. 174-175.

64. Barron and Paul, pp. 188-189; and see below, pp. 98-99, 112 .-

65. Barron and Paul, chapters 4, 7; pp. 32-33; Yathay, p. 60; and see below, pp. 73-74, 88-89.

66. Ponchaud, pp. 13, 38.

67. Ibid., pp. 72-73.

68. Ibid., pp. 13-14. In interviews in 1980 former residents of pre-1975 DK liberated zones gave more importance to artillery and T-28s than to B-52s.

69. Ibid., p. 15. It is in a way amusing that Ponchaud's strange belief in the power of "illiterate memories" to "supply exact details" seems to reveal a pro-peasant romanticism similar to that of the DK leadership - a romanticism shared by Jean Lacouture, who in his

Survive le peuple cambodgien, p. 73, mistakenly assumed that Ponchaud had based his writing mainly on reports of peasants "[who are] less capable than others of organizing a fabulation."

70. Ponchaud, pp. 14, 79, 72-73, 75, respectively.

71. Ponchaud, pp. 84, 88-91. For further detail on the same incident see Barron and Paul, pp. 193-196, and on conditions in Battambang, below, pp. 100-114.

72. Ponchaud, pp. 23, 72-73.

73. Osborne, "The Kampuchean Refugee Situation," p. 35.

74. George C. Hildebrand and Gareth Porter, Cambodia: Starvation and Revolution, which is very good for the period before April 1975 - see below, pp. 75-78. News from Kampuchea was published by the Committee of Patriotic Kampucheans, P. O. Box 70, Waverly 2024, N.S.W., Australia.

75. For the evacuation and condition of hospitals, see below, pp. 72-78 .. By late 1976 one relatively favorable account had been published. See David P. Chandler with Ben Kiernan and Muy Hong Lim, "The Early Phases of Liberation in Northwestern Cambodia: Conversations with' Peang Sophi," No. 10, Working Papers, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, November 1976. Cited further as "Peang Sophi."

76. Ponchaud, p. 61. The same story, with significant differences, is in Barron and Paul, pp. 67-68, 78, 182-183.

77. Ponchaud, pp. 23, 41, 72-73.

78. In the work by Chomsky and Herman cited above, note 54, and very little of which requires revision in the light of new information available since it appeared. The efforts of the authors in compiling information from numerous, often, obscure, sources cannot be too highly praised; and the very critical, often scurrilous, reviews to which they were subjected were usually incompetent, even dishonest,

79. For example, Leopold Labedz, "Under Western Eyes," Encounter, February 1980; Stephen Morris, "Chomsky on U.S. Foreign Policy," Harvard International Review 3, 4 (Dec .- Jan. 1981); W. D. Rubinstein, "Chomsky and the Neo-Nazis," Quadrant (Australia), October 1981, pp. 8-14 (on Cambodia see pp. 10, 13-14).

80. As an example of a changed view of DK and subsequent good scholarship see Ben Kiernan, "Vietnam and the Governments and People of Kampuchea," Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars 11, 4 (1979), and his later publications cited here. Ponchaud, in the stories he provided Shawcross in "The End of Cambodia?" is an example of the new anti-PRK line.

81. For the changes in 1975-78, see chapters 3 and 4, below.

82. An apt characterization which I have paraphrased from Heder, "Occupation," p. 12.

83. Conversation with P.K.F., Bangkok, April 1980.

84. The arrival of the refugee Aphaivongs was related to me by a Thai official. According to the March 23, 1907 "Agreement between France and Siam respecting the Personal Situation of Phya Kathathorn" (last Aphaivong governor of Battambang), Art. 3, a large part of the center of the town was left in his personal possession. (Consolidated Treaty Series, 1907, pp. 53-55.)

85. John Pilger, in his TV program on Cambodia, viewed in Canberra in September 1979. Although Pilger is sensationalist, much of his reporting is valuable.

86. In mid-1980 the population of KID was 48-49% male and 50-51% female, and the number of children under 5 was normal for Southeast Asia. See my "Democratic Kampuchea: CIA to the Rescue."

87. During a visit to the U.S. in November 1982 one of the same young men showed me a clipping of an interview he had given to a local newspaper, and in which he presented himself as an eyewitness to several 'typical' DK atrocities, most of which he had not seen, and one of which, excision and consumption of a living human's liver (an old Khmer warrior tradition), was not only extremely rare in DK (Kiernan has heard of only one case, I none) but was considered a crime punishable by immediate execution of the guilty.

The justification for his inaccurate statements was that such things were 'known' to have occurred and there was no harm in presenting all of the evil of DK, even if known only through hearsay. Similarly, in her study of DK agriculture, M. Martin, p. 23 and note 14, also found that careful investigation of an initially negative picture ("total failure" of irrigation) could reveal interesting nuances and positive examples. Still more intriguing was the remark of Dr. Martinez (cited above, notes 50, 53) that over half the unaccompanied minors of KID, Nong Chan, and Nong Samet who had initially' reported "knowing of" or even "witnessing" their parents' death in DK were eventually reunited with those same parents through the efforts of the international aid agencies. A final example is that of Honda Katuiti, Journey to Cambodia, p. 86, who found "considerable exaggerations and discrepancies" in comparing the testimony of a refugee whom he met in Vietnam with a subsequent on-the-spot check. In particular, the refugee exaggerated the frequency of executions.

88. For example, the anti-Vietnamese stories given by Ponchaud to Shawcross, and published in the latter's article, "The End of Cambodia?" Those stories will be discussed in chapter 4, below.

89. This will be the subject of chapter 5, below.

90. "Kampuchea: A Demographic Catastrophe," National Foreign Assessment Center, May 1980, based on research completed January 17, 1980; and Vickery, "Democratic Kampuchea: CIA to the Rescue."

91. At the time Yathay first made his story public, his reliability was questioned because of his background during the Lon Nol period, or because in conversations in Bangkok after his escape he had not mentioned certain details which appear in his book. For information on this, see Chomsky and Herman, pp. 143-144. His book, however, particularly the first half, is valuable in that his background made him very unfriendly to DK, yet his account is replete with details not in accord with the STV. His experiences fit consistent patterns known from others who were in the same places, and I consider the first half of the book, in its record of facts, as generally very accurate and useful.

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92. On Damban 3, see below, pp. 110-114; and on schooling, pp. 171-174.

93. See below, pp. 165-171.

94. Yathay, pp. 102-103, 114, 138, 142, 157.

95. See also "Peang Sophi."

96. See below, pp. 136-138.

97. See below, p. 104.

98. Burchett, p. 132.

99. Burchett, pp. 97, 126; Yathay, p. 287; below, p. 193.

100. Burchett, p. 100.

101. Lacouture, Survive, p. 74; FEER, February 5, 1982, p. 3. In assessing relative desire to talk in those circumstances, it must be

remembered that in 1975 there was a small group of refugees under tight Thai military control, but in 1980 over 100,000 in an internationally administered camp.

102. Conversations in September 1980.

103. Ea Meng-Try, "Kampuchea: A Country Adrift," Population and Development Review 7, 2 (June 1981), pp. 209-228; conversations with the second person in Canberra.

104. "Kampuchea: A Demographic Catastrophe"; and Vickery, "Democratic Kampuchea: CIA to the Rescue"; see notes 58, 90, above.

105. One example of this was Shawcross, "The End of Cambodia?" although his opinion had changed by the time he wrote "Kampuchea Revives on Food, Aid, and Capitalism," The Bulletin (Australia), March 24, 1981.

106. William Shawcross, "Cambodia: Some Perceptions of a Disaster," in Chandler and Kiernan, eds., Revolution and its Aftermath in Kampuchea. His FEER article was "The Khmer Rouge's Iron Grip on Cambodia," January 2, 1976. In the former publication Shawcross continues the dishonest criticism of Chomsky and Herman which has characterized media treatment of their work. Thus, as straw man, he imputes to Chomsky and Herman a position of alleging government-media collusion in distorting information about Cambodia in 1975-79, and then proceeds to knock it down by showing that U.S. government spokesmen were really very circumspect in their statements. In fact, that is precisely what Chomsky and Herman wrote, in one case citing the same State Department official named by Shawcross. What Chomsky and Herman provided was a damning indictment of media irresponsibility

which still stands and which is naturally embarrassing for Shawcross.

Shawcross also says Chomsky and Herman "would have us believe" that journalists "writing about Cambodia from Phnom Penh [1970-75] . .. supported the US Government or tried to 'conceal' its role." Again a straw man - they said no such thing. What they did write, accurately (pp. 288-289), was that journalists gave insufficient attention to the 'secret' bombings of Cambodia in 1969-70.

107. FEER, January 15, 1982, p. 3; and February 5, 1982, p. 3.

108. The list of articles was in the issue of February 5, 1982, pp. 3-4.

109. FEER, October 24, 1975, pp. 8-10.

110. FEER, January 2, 1976, pp. 9-10. Shaweross was here exhibiting the same critical attitude as Chomsky and Herman.

111. Quotes from, respectively, Kissinger's letter to the editor, The Economist, September 8, 1979, p. 7; Years of Upheaval, p. 339; Shawcross, "Some Perceptions of a Disaster," p. 241. Surely Shawcross cannot be so naive as to imagine that the international campaign mounted on behalf of Khmers since 1979 has much to do with "the moral force of the left." It has occurred because the interests of several governments, including the U.S., China, and Thailand, were directly involved.

112. FEER, September 23, 1977, pp. 32-33.

113. FEER, October 29, 1976, pp. 20-23.

114. FEER, October 21, 1977, pp. 20-24.

115. See notes 90 and 104, above; and on the East, below, pp. 130-138. The anti-intellectual bias enunciated by those journalists in their letter indicates that, along with the CIA researchers who

compiled the report and whose anti-PRK stance implicitly, if not overtly, supports DK, they may have found their true niche as friends of DK.

116. As.Georg Lukacs wrote in a discussion of "the commodity relation" permeating administrative and intellectual areas, "This phenomenon can be seen at its most grotesque in journalism. ... The journalist's 'lack of convictions,' the prostitution of his experiences and beliefs is comprehensible only as the apogee of capitalist reification." From his History and Class Consciousness (London: Merlin Press, 1971), p. 100.

117. See chapter 3, below, pp. 110-114.

118. In order to avoid accusing anyone of alleged crimes with only third-hand information, I continue to suppress the surname.

119. It appeared on the final page of that issue of FEER. A letter to Ane requesting information about her role went unanswered.

120. Christopher Jones, "In the Land of the Khmer Rouge," New York Times, December 20, 1981; admission of the fakery appeared in an AAP-AP dispatch of February 22 published in The Age (Melbourne), February 25, 1982, p. 9.

# CHAPTER 3 The Zero Years

## After the Sideshow

In February 1976 a group of anonymous Western social scientists published a “Blueprint for the Future [of Thailand]” in the Bangkok Post newspaper.1 Although Thailand is 4 times larger than Cambodia in area and 7 times the population, their political,

economic, and social structures before 1970 were so similar that any analysis of the former must have some relevance for study of the latter.

It is therefore interesting for our purposes to note that according to “Blueprint,” if Thailand was to avoid a revolution certain measures needed to be rapidly taken: the surplus population of the cities should return to the countryside, much more investment should be made in agriculture, the administration should be decentralized, unproductive wealth should be taken from the rich and political power from the old elites.

Anyone who has even cursorily followed the media treatment of Cambodia since 1975 will recognize those as measures taken by the DK regime, although they were carried out to an extreme far beyond that envisaged by the authors of “Blueprint.”

Those gentlemen were of course talking of a pre-revolutionary Thailand with its material infrastructure and social organization still intact, not of a country destroyed by war; and since one of the excesses imputed to Cambodia was the execution of the former regime’s military, it is worth noting that in their discussion of decentralization of law-enforcement agencies, the authors of “Blueprint” recognized the dangers of turning “a force of 25,000 retrenched policemen loose on an already fragile society.” They said that “careful screening processes” would be required “to weed out the bad ones” before the old police could be integrated with the new, popularly chosen forces.2

They did not suggest what “screening processes” should be effected, but they at least recognized a problem which arises whenever rapid political change, revolutionary or otherwise, is attempted: what is to be done with those groups who will fight the changes no matter how benevolently they may be carried out? Obviously something must be done to neutralize them; and with that recognized in principle by western social scientists, one may ask what they would advocate as a proper response in a country such as Cambodia, where the ‘retrenched’ forces may have been 6-8 times the figure projected in “Blueprint” in a much smaller, war-devastated area.

Although this chapter is first of all descriptive, such a description cannot help but be evaluative as well; and indeed part of the purpose of this study is an evaluation as well as a description of Democratic Kampuchea: It is therefore useful to point out at the beginning that some of the principles of reorganization applied in DK could find approval by western moderates in a similar situation.

Even attitudes toward DK itself in those milieux could be cautious and moderate when the authors were writing, not for the popular press, but for consumption by serious scholars and officials.

Guy J. Pauker, for example, in a book devoted to predictions and policies for Southeast Asia in the 1980s and published in 1977, evoked the problems of growing populations, the need for more food, increasing scarcity of land, and insufficient urban employment for the hordes of peasants moving into the cities. He showed some

concern that voluntary migrations within Southeast Asia were “not from overpopulated villages into the wilderness” [as they should be in order to develop new land] “but from the countryside to the cities,” and that “the noncommunist countries use only mild administrative measures to slow down the flow.” Indonesia’s ‘transmigration’ program, for instance, was too modest. In this connection one would expect some reference to Cambodia, and Pauker wrote, “the forced migration inflicted on the Cambodians after April 1975 … is certainly not a desirable model.” And that was all - not that the Cambodians were doing the wrong thing, or that Cambodia was being destroyed by inhuman murderers, but only that they were not taking apparently necessary steps in the best way.

This is the only comment on the Cambodian revolution in the entire book.3

A couple of years later Douglas Pike, a U.S. government expert on Indochina, was able to give a semi-official imprimatur to conclusions similar to those for which western observers sympathetic to DK had been villified a couple of years earlier: Pol Pot was the “charismatic” leader of a “bloody but successful peasant revolution with a substantial residue of popular support,” under which "on a statistical basis, most of them [peasants] … did not experience much in the way of brutality."4

Barron and Paul, Pauker, and Pike, from milieux either close to the U.S. government or which represent the epitome of U.S. middle-class conventional wisdom, and who share similar preconceptions, have

thus said very different things about Democratic Kampuchea - of course, over time, a matter to be taken up later. Those who do not share their view, or who wish to go beyond them, might desire more precise details about whether DK was simply a chamber of horrors, or a popular, if somewhat violent, peasant revolution which was possibly doing the right things in other than the best way. They might also be curious as to whether Cambodia is a guide for the Thailand seen through “Blueprint.” The following chapter is intended to provide some answers.

We shall see that all of them were partly correct. Democratic Kampuchea was certainly, and first of all, a victorious peasant revolution, perhaps the first real one in modern times, and it had at first considerable support; some of its policies were rational but carried out badly; and as a result it became at times and places a real chamber of horrors.

The partial correctness of their views does not excuse the propaganda character of their statements, which, as they stand, are of little use either for a description or an explanation of DK. Neither have we as yet an explanation of why a peasant revolution which carried out policies considered correct by western analysts became so bloody that in the end it lost the support of its most favored class, the peasantry. This is one of the things we seek to explain, and in the process the partial truths will be separated from the propaganda and shown to have been partial both geographically and temporally.

## Administrative divisions

Democratic Kampuchea was divided administratively into seven geographical zones named after their compass directions: North, Northeast, East, Southwest, West, Northwest, and Center, plus the Kratie Special Region no. 505, and before mid-1977 the Siemreap Special Region no. 106.5 The zones, like lower-level divisions, were also numbered, but since they appear to have been little used, I ignore them here.6 The zonal division I have outlined was not always completely stable. Before 1975 the West and Southwest had formed a single large zone called 'Southwest'; there was a Special Zone comprising Dambans 15, 21, 25, and 33;7 and after the purge of early 1977 the North, which had included Dambans 41, 42, and 43, was split into the Central Zone and a new North Zone consisting of Damban 103 and the former Siemreap Special Region, redesignated Damban 44.8

The zones did not correspond to any pre-revolutionary administrative unit. Each included more than one of the old provinces, and sometimes traditional provinces were split between two zones. The Northwest was nearly coextensive with Battambang and Pursat provinces; the North Oddar Meanchey, Preah Vihear, Siemreap, Kompong Thom, and part of Stung Treng; the Northeast part of Stung Treng plus Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri;9 Kratie Special Region most of old Kratie province, with the exception of two areas north and south of the bend in the Mekong River; the East part of Kratie, Kompong Cham, and Kandal as well as all of Prey Veng and Svay Rieng; the Southwest the remainder of southern Kandal, Takeo, Kampot, and part of Kompong Speu; and the West Kompong

Chhnang, a small corner of Pursat, part of Kompong Speu, and Koh Kong. The boundaries of the Central Zone are not clear, but it included the remainder of Kompong Cham province north of the Mekong River.10

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Each zone was sub-divided into Regions (dambans), all or nearly all of which crossed old administrative boundaries, and which were universally known by number. The numbering of most regions shows some systematization, but the rationale of this is unclear. Numbers 1-7 made up the Northwest, which may reflect its status at the time the CPK (Communist Party) first devised their administrative system, probably well before 1970, as the first truly revolutionary area. This impression is strengthened by the circumstance that Damban no. 1, bordered on the west by Thailand, on the north by the road from Battambang to Pailin, on the east by the road from Battambang to the Pursat border, and on the south by the Battambang-Pursat border, included the Samlaut district where the peasant revolts in 1967 and 1968 marked the beginning, for some Cambodian revolutionaries, of overt armed struggle against the government.1 The numbering of the other Northwest regions, however, cannot be so easily fitted into a significant scheme.

Beyond the Northwest the Regions are not numbered consecutively throughout the country, but, in general, following a zonal code. Thus, in the Eastern Zone, another early center of revolutionary activity and which represented a distinct faction of Cambodian communists, the five Regions were numbered from 20 to 24, with no obvious rationale, except that no. 20 was geographically in the center and contained another old communist base, Kamchay Mea.

The Southwest and Western Zones also held several old insurgent strongholds, but their zonal codes are less distinct, perhaps reflecting both their pre-1975 unity and earlier stages of organization. In general the zonal code for the old Southwest consisted of numbers in the 30s, Dambans 31, 32, 33, 35, 37, with 31, 32, and 37 falling in the West after the division; but it also included Damban 13 on the Vietnamese border south of Takeo, Damban 11 in Northern Koh Kong, and Damban 15 just west of Phnom Penh, the last two of which fell into the Western zone after the split in 1975. At the same time the Southwest acquired Damban 25, originally of the East, and from 1971 in the Special Zone.

In the Northern and Central Zones the code was generally in the 40s, no 41 just to the northeast of Phnom Penh, followed northward by 42 and 43; then 44 in Siemreap province; but also inexplicably Damban 103 in the far north in the former province of Preah Vihear.12 This reflects an earlier arrangement in which Preah Vihear was included in a northern and northeastern zone, for in the latter, as it stood after 1975, the Regions were numbered 100, 102, 104, 105, 107.

Below the Regions the administrative units seem to have generally followed pre-revolutionary terminology: srok (district), khum (sub-district), and phum, the last meaning ‘village’ and having a population of 200-400 people. Refugee information, however, varies with respect to these levels, and for most of them the important unit, and the one around which their daily lives revolved, was the cooperative (sahakor), generally equivalent to a khum, and incorporating several phum.13

The administration at each level was headed by a triumvirate of officials called the ‘committee’ and at the upper levels entitled respectively ‘Secretary,’ ‘Deputy Secretary,’ and ‘Member.’ At the two lowest levels, in 1975, they were usually local people, if not long-term CPK personnel at least chosen from among the poor peasantry, and the chief was called protean, ‘President.’ In some areas consisting entirely of ‘new’ villages, that is, exiled urbanites, ‘new’ people were appointed as me-phum (village chief), often with results unsatisfactory both for themselves and for the CPK authorities.14

At Zone and Region levels, some officials who can be identified were, in 1975, often intellectuals who had joined the CPK maquis in the 1960s.

Others were members of the old ICP, Issarak, or Pracheachon groups, or men whose political and militant past can only be identified as Issarak.15 No one has yet been able to compile a complete list of these top cadres,16 and many of the refugees know nothing at all about the identities of the men under whom they worked and lived.

At first this seems strange, but all cadres used noms-de-guerre, beyond which it is often difficult to penetrate, and most ‘new’ people felt quite correctly that curiosity about such matters was best avoided. Even among the CPK people, former low-level officials often claim ignorance of the men on the Region and Zone committees above them, apparently because the old military ‘need-to-know’ rule was strictly applied in Democratic Kampuchea.

Another reason for such ignorance even on the part of members of the system, and one of the more intriguing aspects of DK administration in general, was its extreme decentralization with a very great degree of autonomy for each vertical administrative unit and virtually total compartmentalization of units horizontally.

This is emphasized by all refugees who have attempted to give coherent thought to the system, and in any case appears spontaneously after no more than half a dozen interviews with people from different zones or even regions. Almost no two regions were alike with respect to conditions of life. Amount of food, its distribution, work discipline and general hardship, numbers of executions and execution policy, even the content and extent of political education differed among zones and regions; while execution policy and food distribution sometimes differed even among contiguous villages.

The compartmentalization often enabled resourceful, and lucky, ‘new’ people to play the system against itself. Apparently if one fled from a cooperative and succeeded in reaching another

administrative unit without being caught by one's own cadres, or military of a superordinate level, there was a good chance of being taken on in another cooperative with few questions asked, since most units were short of labor; and because of the lack of communication among coordinate units, pursuit was difficult.

In origin the decentralization and autonomy were the result of practical necessity. At the end of the first Indochina war in 1954, the original Cambodian revolutionary movement broke up and the leaders who remained in the country retreated to isolated rural areas, such as Samlaut in Battambang (Damban 1), Chhouk in Kampot (Damban 35), the backwoods of Prey Veng and Kompong Cham (Dambans 20, 41), and Amleang-Phnom Aural in Kompong Speu and Kompong Chhnang (Dambans 31, 32).17

When the armed struggle began in the late 1960s it began in different regions under different leaders in very loose coordination, perhaps even with different ideologies and programs; and one former DK official has declared that during the war, troops from different administrations were not mixed.18

By April 1975 these Zonal and Regional leaders were the ones who controlled the armed forces and thereby potentially had the jump on political power. As Stephen Heder has pointed out, when Ieng Sary, Pol Pot, and Khieu Samphan arrived in Phnom Penh they may have had no military power base of their own; and as Ben Kiernan has emphasized, the various military units were not reorganized into a single army until July 1975.19

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## The Occupation of Phnom Penh

Phnom Penh, on April 17, 1975 and the following few days, was thus occupied by at least three or four different zonal forces which up to that time had operated autonomously in different parts of the country with coordination, possibly fairly loose, only at the top.

Tep is a young man from Chhouk, Kampot, Southwest Zone with very dark skin, rather handsome, a ready smile, and obviously intelligent.20 He was from a peasant family, but managed to continue in school up to the first baccalaureat, the next-to-last year of secondary education. Then, in 1972, disgusted with the Lon Nol government and attracted by the revolution, he left school and, with many other young people of the area, joined the revolutionary forces. During 1972-73 he fought in several battles in the south, where he estimated fatal casualties were about 50%.21 In 1974 his unit began to move northward, and participated in the battles of Kompong Sela, one of the bloodiest of the whole war, Trapeang Kraleng, Kompong Speu, until at the end of 1974 it was on the Phnom Penh front, where it remained until the final offensive and capture of the city.22

As late as April 15, when it was clear they would soon enter the city, his unit had still not been informed of plans to evacuate the population. On the contrary, his battalion commander, a fellow student before 1972, told them the plan was just to search out Lon Nol officers. Then between April 15 and 17 they learned that the plan had changed. The inhabitants would be evacuated, and to make the exercise easier, were to be told - and the troops knew this was a lie - that the evacuation was for only three days. Nevertheless, the soldiers had clear orders not to loot, or to kill unless they met with resistance. As for the policy toward Lon Nol officers and civilian officials, they did not know who was marked for execution, only that they were to be identified and rounded up.

Kong is another former high school student who joined the revolutionary army early on, in 1970, but residing in northern Kompong Cham province he found himself among the Northern Zone forces.23 He was never a frontline soldier, but during 1970-74 was involved in economic and cultural work, and then was sent to an artillery unit for the final assault on the capital.

In contrast to Tep from the Southwest, Kong knew all along that Phnom Penh was to be evacuated, and the northern troops were told that all Lon Nol officers from the rank of lieutenant were to be killed, along with all important civilian officials.

In the East, as we shall see, policy toward Phnom Penh may originally have differed considerably from the above, but for a former teacher who had been captured by the Communist forces in an attack on

Kompong Cham in 1973, the first public information in the Koh Sautin area of Damban 22 was the announcement that Phnom Penh had been taken and the people in the villages should prepare to receive the “brothers and sisters” from the city who would soon arrive in the countryside.24 He then borrowed a motorcycle, dressed in black like a cadre - which in itself is a comment on discipline at the time - and rode off to look for friends and relatives on their way out of Phnom Penh.

Just outside the city he found thousands of people camped waiting for the three days after which they could return home; and he told them they might as well forget about returning and start getting settled in the villages. As for the policy toward enemy officers, it seemed to vary considerably in the East, and he could not determine what the orders from the top might have been. On that subject there is one more observation. One of the left-wing intellectuals who returned - from North Korea - after the end of the war, stopped for two weeks in Hanoi on his way home in December 1976, and was told by the Cambodian embassy there that only officers from the rank of major upward were targets for execution, along with civilians such as police secret agents.25

Within the city itself there was one observer who had an opportunity to observe CPK actions close to the center, and with a relatively dispassionate eye, since he knew he would not be targeted either for execution or evacuation to the rice fields. This was the late Henri Becker, a French technician in the Ministry of Information who was

kept on the job by the new authorities for several days and conversed with cadres of apparently rather high rank.26

He describes occupied Phnom Penh as divided into 5 sectors held by different forces under autonomous commanders.

The northern sector of the city was occupied by troops from Kompong Cham, Kompong Thom, Pursat, Kompong Chhnang and northern Kompong Speu, thus from the Western, Northwestern, and Northern (here part of Kompong Cham) Zones.27 This included the Ministry of Information with Becker himself, and presumably the cadres he met were of this group. They also held Phnom Penh's fifth sector, Tuol Kork-Pochentong.

Then there was the center sector of Phnom Penh south of Kramuon Sar as far as the independence monument, and occupied by troops from the Southwest, which fits the account of the southwestern soldier, Tep, who said his unit came in on the Pochentong road and occupied the central market (Phsar Thmei) sector.

According to Becker the western side of the city was occupied by troops from the south, which does not correspond to any revolutionary zone, but given the location they were probably also Southwest Zone forces.

As for the southern sector of the city, Becker relates that it was taken by troops coming from the "southeast (Takhmau)," which probably means they were Southwest Zone forces.28

The autonomous, uncoordinated character of these different military units was highlighted by a certain amount of conflict among them on the first day of the occupation, and by the circumstances that a fake “Khmer Rouge” unit organized in Phnom Penh was able to occupy the Ministry of Information first and even turn away the arriving CPK troops.29

Although Becker seems to have been well informed about the initial administrative divisions of the city, he clearly had no idea of CPK Zones and Regions. In particular, he seems to have been unaware of the existence of an Eastern Zone, or of its troops in Phnom Penh, which is interesting in the light of later developments; and his ignorance on this point may have been due to the Northern Zone bias of his informants. In fact he was told by his principal CPK contact, Nhiem, that “six divisions participated in the offensive against the capital … on three fronts: South, West, and North,” while the troops stationed east of the Mekong were only responsible for neutralizing the naval forces on the river and shelling the city just before its occupation.30

We know from other evidence, however, that East Zone troops occupied part of the city, perhaps even the neighborhood of Wat Ounalom within Becker’s central city sector taken by Southwestern troops. An important DK official who fled to Thailand in 1979 recalled that Phnom Penh was occupied by East Zone troops from across the Mekong, Northern troops coming down route 5, Southwest and Special Zone troops along route 4, and from Takhmau the troops of

‘Ta Nath,’ an officer described both as a Special Zone and Southwestern man.31 From what we now know about later intraparty conflict, it seems likely that the skirmishes among CPK forces known to Becker and caused by “trespassing in the different zones,” may have involved in particular rival East and Southwest forces.32

In passing, it is necessary to deny Lacouture’s affirmation, based on God only knows what wild stories, that Phnom Penh was taken by “completely primitive montagnard guerilleros” of the Khmer Loeu upland minorities of Mondulkiri and Rattanakiri.33

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## The evacuation

In the northern part of Phnom Penh, where Becker was close to the center of authority, the order for evacuation was not given until the morning of the 18th, the day following the occupation. This delay, however, was apparently not due to indecision over policy, as may have occurred among other zonal forces, but may have been due to loss of contact between Northern Zone command and troops in the rapidity of the final advance.34

The orders given in the northern sector were quite brutal, and contrast with reports from sectors of Phnom Penh under Southwest

or East Zone troops.35 The inhabitants were to be given only 10 minutes to prepare provisions for two days, and then were to start out of the city on the road northward. Then all the houses were to be searched for valuable goods such as arms, radios, recorders, motorcycles, and bicycles, which were to be collected and brought to headquarters. Locked buildings and shops were blasted open with rockets and their contents carried away, or sometimes destroyed in a manner which appeared to be purely looting; and as a result numerous fires broke out which destroyed considerable property.

The relative harshness of the northern evacuation in comparison with other sectors continues to appear in stories describing conditions en route.

There was more harassment, and more frequent killing of men believed to have been Lon Nol soldiers. Such is the evacuation picture presented in Ponchaud, most of whose informants seem to have taken that route;36 and it is confirmed by my own conversations.37 Nevertheless, some evacuees managed to keep their cars long enough to drive as far as the ferry crossing the Tonle Sap toward Kompong Cham, and were thereafter not pressed, taking up to two months to cover another 50-100 miles. Ponchaud, too, was able to write that "there was nothing very brutal about this first deportation."38 One informant also added that the worst brutalities en route in the first evacuation were along the road to Kompong Chhnang and Battambang, while conditions on the other northern road, toward Kompong Thom and Siemreap, were easier. This is significant for the overall picture of the DK regime in that the two

routes were in different zones, the first in the Northwest and the second in the North.

In spite of what appears as a general DK policy to consider all Lon Nol officers as enemies, not all of them felt the threat as imminent. Major Yem, a former teacher. who had been at the Chom Chau base on the Pochentong road beyond the airport, said that on April 17 he simply started walking into town in full uniform, sometimes along with the occupying DK troops, and was not bothered. In his opinion there was no attempt in those first days to arrest and execute officers except those of very high rank and notoriety.39

But the Pochentong road along which Major Yem proceeded was the entrance route of the Southwest Zone troops, whose policies and actions seem to have been somewhat different from those pursued by their Northern colleagues.

The evacuation to the south, under the supervision of Southwest Zone troops,40 has been the subject of at least two published accounts, one of which intended to purvey a total view which does not stand up under analysis, or under comparison with most other refugee reports from that experience. That is the version of Barron and Paul, whom I have discussed to some extent above; and the second is Pin Yathay's L'Utopie Meurtriere, also mentioned previously.

From both of their stories we see that in those sectors of Phnom Penh controlled by Southwest Zone troops, the order to evacuate was not delayed.

It came immediately on the morning of April 17.41 In contrast to the Northern sector, though, there was nothing like a ten-minute ultimatum. People could take hours to pack for the journey, and in some cases waited for a day or more before actually leaving their houses.42 Neither, apparently, was there any serious search and confiscation of household articles. Cars and motorcycles were loaded up with all manner of things, both useful and useless, for the drive down Monivong Boulevard toward the southern suburbs.

Barron and Paul make much of arbitrary, summary executions along this route; and there must have been some, but it seems that they have collected every such case, real or rumored, and made them into the typical picture. Every corpse along the road becomes a communist atrocity, ignoring that just a few days earlier there had been fierce battles all around the city.

It is impossible now to reconstruct and analyze all those incidents, but we must also enter into the record that other refugees who passed along the same route report that there were no atrocities at all, and that the pace was moderate and bearable.

Even Pin Yathay, whose book was intended as an atrocity story against the DK regime, only claims to have witnessed one execution on the way out of town, although he had hearsay knowledge of

others; he quotes a fellow engineer who considered the communist action as rational under the circumstances; and he himself found that "the exodus had taken place without police brutality, without administrative harassment."43

That attitude was shared by one of the KID teachers, who told me that up to 1975 he had sympathized with the revolutionaries, and in particular admired Khieu Samphan; and during the first days of the evacuation felt no fear or apprehension about the future. He had confidence for the moment in the rationality of the CPK actions.44 Another of my informants, also a teacher, and a compiler of very careful memoirs concerning his own and others' experiences, proceeded southward with his family and car, like Pin Yathay, pushing it on flat stretches and driving only uphill in order to conserve fuel; and he stated unequivocally that during the two weeks it took to reach Saang, south of Phnom Penh, he witnessed no brutality or killing. He acknowledged that there may have been some, but considered it exceptional.45 Such was apparently the impression of a colleague, about whose experiences he prepared a written report designed as a whole to protest DK conditions. Nevertheless, the only complaint made by the informant about his 13-day march from Phnom Penh to Kompong Trabek, province of Prey Veng, was the brilliant sunshine which caused him, as an albino, particular discomfort.46

Southern Prey Veng, his destination, was in the heart of the Eastern Zone, Region 24; and this leads us to the subject of the Eastern Zone role in the occupation and evacuation of the capital, a matter of great

intrinsic interest given the peculiarities of the Eastern position over the following four years.

Becker's information, obtained from Northern cadres, shows no awareness of Eastern Zone troops as such within Phnom Penh at all; and he seems to have been told that their duties were confined to an area beyond the Mekong river. Yet the troops which Becker says came from the southeast could well have been Eastern Zone: many refugees recognized them in the city because of their distinctive military fatigue, rather than black, uniforms; and in the account of Pin Yathay there is a curious incident which seems to show that they had a different attitude toward evacuation than the other Zonal forces.

Yathay, informed of the evacuation order by the Southwestern troops who had occupied his residential quarter, packed his family into two cars, and then decided to first drive to Wat Ounalom, beside the river, to ask advice of his uncle, Huot Tat, one of the two Buddhist patriarchs of Cambodia.

There they found that the DK troops, "contrary to their comrades," were wearing fatigue uniforms which were already known in Phnom Penh as indicating troops from the provinces east of the river.47 Thus contrary to Becker's information, Eastern Zone troops occupied part of Phnom Penh along the river front on the eastern side of the city. Wat Ounalom was filling up with members of Phnom Penh's elite searching for refuge in the city's most prestigious temple, and hoping against hope that the evacuation order was a mistake. Throughout the 17th they were left alone and not ordered to move out; and late in

the afternoon a monk was sent to the DK headquarters in the old Ministry of Information to ask for definite information. There he was told by a well-bred DK officer that the evacuation rumors were unfounded and unreasonable, and "I can give you my word of honor that I know nothing of that order."48

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There is nothing in Yathay's account to indicate the Zone to which that officer belonged, but we know that the Southwestern and Northern Zones had already formulated such a policy, even if the North was a day late in carrying it out. The most important point, in any case, is that there were DK officers in Phnom Penh on April 17 who neither knew of nor approved of the policy; and only on the following day were the people at Wat Ounalom told they had to leave, at which time Yathay was able, with his two cars, to choose his own route out of town.

If I have gone into some detail about this, it is because over the next four years factional cum zonal differences and conflicts were a crucial aspect of the DK regime, and it is important to establish that some signs of this appeared even in the first days of their victory.

Like much else that seems to have happened in DK, possibilities for disagreement may have been built into the original policy decisions.

According to a former cadre from the Southwest, the ‘Pol Pot’ zone par excellence, there was no disagreement in the party or the army about evacuation per se; and the decision had been taken 10 days before liberation. There was, however, no set period in which it was to be carried out, and each region and unit could make their own decision about the modalities. There was likewise, according to that source, no central directive about the destinations of the evacuated population, and people could go wherever they wished, subject presumably to on-the-spot decisions of the units occupying the city. This explanation at least can account for the varieties of experience reported by the evacuees; and the informant admitted that there had been some disagreement and fighting among the troops in the city.49

Probably the rudest aspect of the evacuation was the treatment meted out to the sick and wounded in the evacuation of most of the hospitals; and since this subject has been given shrill attention in accounts of arbitrary DK brutality, it merits some discussion here too.

The discussion should start with a survey of medical care as it was in the last months before the end of the war. This is not a new subject but was given considerable attention at the time by journalists, American and international officials, and scholars; and adequate documentation is therefore available.

Unfortunately the hysteria attendant on DK efforts to remodel Cambodia have caused most people to forget what conditions prevailed there shortly before the end of the war

In the country as a whole nearly half of the hospital facilities had been destroyed by bombing or artillery. Most of these, to be sure, were outside of Phnom Penh, which had suffered very little physical destruction. But, as we know, the city's population had increased nearly five-fold, putting a strain on facilities which may have been only adequate in the beginning. In normal times, 17,500 beds were needed, but in 1974 there were only 7,438 and these were crowded into a space designed for only 3,000. One of the largest hospitals, Preah Ket Melea, was 200% overcrowded. Another, the Khmero-Soviet Hospital, had twice as many patients as beds and just over a quarter of its normal complement of doctors.50

The number of medical personnel was also in decline, with the number - of physicians having decreased by 20% already in the first year of the war.

In each subsequent year, more of them, worried about the outcome of the war and finding the conditions of their work impossible, went off to France or other western countries. Contrary to what one would infer from sensation- hungry journalism, the dearth of doctors in Cambodia today is not due primarily to DK executions, but to voluntary emigration during 1970-75. Of the approximately 450 doctors at the outbreak of the war,51 about 200, at least, are alive abroad, perhaps more, and in September 1979 John Pilger, possibly not realizing that the prewar total was under 500, wrote that 350 were alive in France alone.52 Since all but about 20 of those abroad

left before the end of the war, Phnom Penh, in 1974-75, may have had a worse doctor/patient ratio than today.

Some of the pre-April 1975 descriptions of hospital conditions merit a second reading. The facilities were not only overcrowded; for the most part they were crude and unsanitary. There was an acute shortage of medicines and drugs. Death frequently resulted from infection and lack of proper care; medication was not being administered to patients suffering severed limbs or gross traumatic abdominal wounds. Little or inadequate antibiotic therapy was being given to patients in need of such therapy.53

The same report mentioned that “patients overflowed the ward and were lying … in the halls and corridors, … the stink of pus and infection mingled with the foul odor from clogged, flooded toilets.” Hospital operating rooms were "crudely furnished, unclean and totally without sterile precautions."54

Other observers reported “an amputee, still in great pain, has to lie in a hospital corridor because there is no room for him in the wards, which are reminiscent of Scutari.” Amputations, moreover, were being performed by “young medical student[s],” as in the cases of a man and his daughter who had both just lost arms.55

These details provide an interesting counterpoint to descriptions of Communist hospitals in the horror stories of B/P and Yathay,56 and indicate that for the average person the new regime did not necessarily mean a decline in standards of medical care.57

Such reports also indicate that by April 1975 medical care in general in Phnom Penh had reached a nadir of hopelessness and could only be reformed by drastic measures. One might argue that the new regime, rather than sending doctors out of the city along with everyone else, should have kept them in town to gradually clean up the hospitals. Nevertheless, DK medical policy in April 1975 was not just brutality for its own sake, as our journalists would have us believe, but was a necessarily crude attempt to cope with a hopeless situation with hardly any equipment or personnel.

The sick and wounded were not just pushed out into the countryside to die, but rather, as Hildebrand and Porter already reported, many were transferred to the better-run establishments from those which were in unacceptably bad condition. Perhaps some would argue that here Hildebrand and Porter have used tainted information, coming from official DK sources; but we find corroboratory stories even from among the refugees. Barron and Paul, of all people, show us a medical student who saved himself from immediate evacuation by first posing as a patient and then working as a doctor.58

A similar, perhaps really the same, story was published in the Bangkok Post.39 The informant, given the pseudonym Sak Sau, was a former first-year medical student who worked as a doctor for two months after April 17.

He had first taken refuge from the evacuation in a temporary hospital at the Olympic Stadium, and then worked at what had been the

private surgical hospital of a highly qualified physician, Dr. Kum Song Seung. Such an establishment had probably been kept in good condition up to the time of the occupation. According to Sau, thousands of patients, presumably those evacuated from places like Preah Ket Melea, came there for treatment. Unfortunately there were no doctors left, only a few medical students, conditions were primitive, and treatment often crude, even brutal. The hospital, however, was given special treatment. After the city water supply stopped functioning, DK soldiers brought water in fire trucks; and there was plenty of food available. Toward the end of May some patients were transferred to the Khmero-Soviet hospital and others to the old revolutionary base in Amleang; and in mid-June a Communist medical team replaced Sau and the other students, who were finally sent into the countryside.

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The reason why Sak Sau and others were at the Olympic Stadium was that on April 15, the government radio ordered "all military surgeons, civilian physicians, and medical students in their fourth year and longer to report to the medical reception center at the Borei Keila [Olympic] sports stadium."60

This order obviously deprived all other hospitals of doctors and meant that their patients had been without care for two days before the fall of Phnom Penh.

The revolutionary forces thus made some attempt to continue emergency measures begun under their predecessors for reasons which are not clear. If the city had not fallen, would the old government have tried to centralize all medical care in one place? And was the reason for such a measure the flight of so many doctors?

One might argue that it would have been more humane to move doctors back to other hospitals, but the reports cited above show why the DK forces might have rejected that option.

Descriptions of Phnom Penh medicine just before the end of the war together with stories such as that of Sak Sau indicate that even in their treatment of the ill and wounded the CPK forces were facing an incredibly bad situation. Cambodia's medical system, inadequate at best, had been destroyed, even in the capital, by the war, and most of the doctors had already fled. Even though more rational use could have been made of remaining medical personnel and some hospital patients were cruelly evacuated, it is absurdly irresponsible to fault the new regime for being unable to cope, in a manner acceptable to the affluent West, with such a situation.

Closely related to the question of medical care and the evacuation of Phnom Penh hospitals by the DK is that of food rations, malnutrition,

and starvation, complaints about which form one of the consistent themes in nearly all refugee stories.

Starvation was not unknown; and malnutrition was common. The point of the present discussion is not to minimize such facts, but to put them in proper context at the time of the evacuation of Phnom Penh and the first few months of the new regime. As B/P for once note correctly, the basic measure for rice became the condensed milk can holding about 250 grams, even though they are mistaken in attributing the rice to U.S. aid;61 and during the first few months this was the usual daily ration. Ponchaud goes into more detail, explaining, correctly in principle, that conditions differed widely depending on time and place. He is probably incorrect, though, in implying that the ration throughout most of the country in 1975 was only half a tin per day, and in particular in the statement that in Koh Thom, south of Phnom Penh, and one of the best food areas in DK, the ration was cut to two tins per week. Pin Yathay, who cannot be suspected of sympathy for DK, was in Koh Thom for several weeks and considered the rations adequate, although he does not specify quantities. Even later, when the situation had deteriorated, it was possible, by careful economizing and communal cooking, to survive.62

But providing mere survival in Cambodia's natural conditions, we are led to believe, was at least incompetence, if not a crime; and from reading the Barrons, Pauls, Ponchauds, and Yathays one would think the CPK to be entirely responsible for the situation.

“Cambodia had never known a famine,” it was a “granary of all Indochina,” says Ponchaud.63 He does admit, however, that by 1974 there was a food crisis, but only acknowledges hunger in the ‘liberated’ zone. In the government sector “most of the population” were being fed with rice brought in by the Americans.

The London Sunday Times Magazine article quoted above was much more honest in reporting that “starvation was unknown in Cambodia until the war”; but “now 50 babies a week are dying of malnutrition [just in Phnom Penh]” and other children were "disfigured by starvation."64

By 1974 the rice supply for Phnom Penh was only about one-third the quantity required; and after September of that year the average head of a household was not earning enough to buy the minimum requirement even supposing it to be available. In February 1975 a family was only allowed 2.75 kg. per person for 10 days at the subsidized price, that is, 270 grams a day, just slightly more than the DK milk tin, and apparently less than Pin Yathay later received in Koh Thom. Moreover, in Lon Nol’s Phnom Penh corruption and diversion of supplies sometimes made even the official minimum unobtainable. Only the rich could afford meat, there was serious malnutrition among adults as well as children, and in March 1975 there were 8,000 deaths from starvation. One of the western officials who compiled the above statistics declared that, “this generation is going to be a lost generation of children,” and he was referring to Khmer Republic, not DK, conditions.65

It is clear from the above that ordinary, or poor, people from Phnom Penh who regularly received a daily milk tin of rice from the DK regime may have eaten better than they did in the last months of Lon Nol's Phnom Penh; and this is certain for those in Kompong Cham who between July and August 1975 received 16 kilos of paddy per month (10.2 kg. milled rice, 340 grams/day), or in Koh Thom where the ration satisfied even Yathay, who had never suffered in Phnom Penh.66

Of course B/P's and Ponchaud's wealthy informants never made that type of comparison, and, to give them the benefit of the doubt, in their comfortable isolation may not have realized the penury of most of their compatriots. The sordid circumstances of hunger in Phnom Penh did not touch those who lived in 'fine white villas' or who, like Yathay, were able to 'cumulate functions' and stuff their pockets with dollars right up to the end.67 Indeed, if it was not ignorance, Yathay was guilty of the most callous prevarication in asserting that the city had never known famine, that every family had large stocks of rice, enough for at least a month, that refugees were well received, that most were active workers who were paid like everyone else, and who "could eat decently and earn a little money."68 One would imagine that it was only the poor functionaries like Yathay himself who suffered because their "meager salaries … did not permit [them] to live."69 Of course, many civil servants, those who were honest, or who did not have Yathay's special opportunities, found themselves among the urban poor and in the circumstances cited above from Hildebrand and Porter. Among my own acquaintances, those who

were still fat in 1972 were thin in 1974, and some who were thin to start with had become cadaverous.

A careful comparison of conditions just before and after April 1975 shows that those accounts which describe Khmer Republic Cambodia in pre-war terms are ahistorical at best, dishonest at worst, and that there is a good bit of truth in the DK contention that only the evacuation could save the city population from worse starvation than it had already known. Certainly the poor of Phnom Penh who, during the evacuation, were allowed to break into food stores and take what they wished, must have agreed.70

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That DK food production and supply were in later years a failure in many parts of the country, and led to worse starvation than ever known in Phnom Penh is true, but that is another matter.

Once the population had left, the new authorities set about putting the deserted city into some kind of order and organizing a central administration, a process about which we know virtually nothing.

The soldier Tep from the Southwest spent one month in the city on guard duty. According to him the general policy was to tear down old ramshackle wooden buildings, but to lock up the others which were

not being used by the new administration and preserve them intact with their contents, which contrasts with the generalized looting described by Becker in the Northern sector. The truth of Tep's remarks is confirmed by several of the first returnees to Phnom Penh in early 1979 who found their houses and personal belongings just as they had left them over three years before.71 Of course, essential materials such as medicines and foodstuffs were taken from pharmacies and stores for distribution and immediate use.

Ponchaud's reports on this subject - one indicating a careful search for food and medicine, but another generalized looting and destruction - show an apparent contradiction which he neglected to elucidate, and which is perhaps explicable by differences in zonal policies. In both cases, though, the suggestions that everything was being taken to Vietnam seem, in the light of what we now know, to have been pure fantasy, not noticed by Ponchaud because of his own anti-Vietnamese prejudices.72

Evidence, more precisely admission, that generalized looting was not DK policy or practice sometimes comes out in the strangest contexts. A former teacher who had worked for a while in 1979 in the Commerce Ministry, desiring to blacken the Vietnamese after he fled to KID, claimed that they looted large quantities of high quality clothing, radios, television sets, tape recorders, and medicines left in the shops during the DK period.73

There was also in 1975 an immediate effort to revitalize the essential sectors of the capital's economy. By June a former resident passing

through could see “paddy fields, dikes, new roads”; corn growing on large and small hills; rice cultivated on the university lawns and ducks in its ponds; textile and bicycle tire factories operating normally; and a state “Commercial Garage” in the former residential suburb of Tuol Kork.74

Pin Yathay, passing through the city in September 1975, also noticed small workshops everywhere, and remarked in particular on the river shipyard at Russey Keo which he had once managed, and which the new authorities seemed to have expanded by turning it into a repair shop not only for boats but for all sorts of engines.75 We also have additional evidence, both from refugees and from the confessions of arrested officials, that in 1975-76 the tempo of industry and the skilled personnel of many factories were maintained, and in some instances technicians were even called back from the evacuation.76

The precise fate of the Republican officials and officers who surrendered at the Ministry of Information on April 17-18 is unknown, although it is certain they were executed. The DK soldier Tep said he knew of no executions within the city, nor where those officials were taken.

Another comment on the subject of executions in Phnom Penh came from a Lon Nol soldier who, rather than leaving the city, stayed in a house in Tuol Kork until the evacuation was completed. When discovered by the DK troops he told them he had been a military photographer, and they employed him for a month taking pictures all over Phnom Penh before sending him to the Northwest.7 He claims

that there was no killing at all in Phnom Penh except for those who resisted, which if not absolutely true at least indicates that some of the victims were able to view the evacuation process as relatively free of violence.

On reaching the countryside, the urban evacuees found themselves subject to a rigidly reorganized society different from anything they had previously imagined.

The society of Democratic Kampuchea was in theory divided into a number of strata based on a class analysis which showed Marxist origins, but which was then distorted beyond anything Marxist by considerations peculiar to the Cambodian situation.

The entire population fell into three large categories called “Full Rights,” “Candidate,” and “Depositee.” The Full Rights people were poor peasants, the lower and middle strata of the middle peasants, and workers.

Candidates were upper middle peasants, wealthy peasants, and petty bourgeoisie; while the Depositees were capitalists and foreign minorities.78

Those situations could be modified, however, by a person’s political behavior or the situation of other family members. For example, even a poor peasant could be demoted to Depositee if it were discovered that his father or brother had been a policeman; and if a Full Rights

person was arrested for any reason his family would then become Depositee.

Moreover, all those evacuated from the towns after April 17, 1975 were considered as Depositees whatever their economic or social status, which meant that virtually all workers or petty bourgeois were placed in that lowest and socially disadvantaged group and that the poorer peasants were de jure as well as de facto the privileged social class.

In principle, Depositees were excluded from any kind of civic life, and were not accepted into the army, even as volunteers. That is, they not only could not hold office, but were to be excluded from village or cooperative meetings where only the Full Rights people had voting rights and the Candidates could express views but not vote. That principle, however, was not always followed, for a number of urban evacuees report attendance at meetings along with people of the two higher categories. For the ex-urbanites, the really operative division was between ‘new’ people (evacuees) and ‘old’ or ‘base’ people (multhan), the peasants who were officially either Full Rights or Candidates, and who had lived in revolutionary areas since before April 1975. This division is all the more meaningful in that even peasants from non-revolutionary areas were classed as Depositees, and in some cases there was a distinction between base area Depositees (former capitalists or non-Khmers) and ‘new’ Depositees from the city.79

As an example of the way in which the policy worked, the soldier Tep had an unpleasant surprise when after a month of duty in the city he was suddenly taken off to prison because the authorities had discovered that one of his brothers was a Lon Nol policeman; and he spent several months at reeducation and hard labor with other DK men whose class backgrounds were similarly tainted.

Thus for reasons which can perhaps not be fully explained, but which will be explored later, the desiderata of a peasant-populist or peasant-anarchist revolution were dressed up in quasi-Marxist class-analysis terminology to become the dominant social ideology of the next 4 years.

## Democratic Kampuchea - Themes and Variations

For most inhabitants of Phnom Penh their destinations in the evacuation and thus their circumstances over the next 312 years were determined by the sector of the city in which they were resident on April 17. There are no surviving statistics on the numbers of people reaching the various zones from Phnom Penh. One former ranking Eastern Zone official estimated that 2 million reached there first, with some being reevacuated later to the North, but that estimate seems exaggerated.80. Given the pattern of occupation of the city, it would seem that the East could not have gotten more than a third, with another third going to the Southwest, and most of the rest to the Northwest, North and West.

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We can assume that DK policy was to send people to less populated areas, and this seems borne out by reports of the second evacuation of late 1975-early 1976. This exercise, termed variously ‘second migration,’ ‘second deportation,’ or ‘second exodus’ in what has been written to date, mainly concerned people leaving the crowded Southwest for the more open spaces of the Northwest, and also a smaller number who were moved out of the East.

Because of the areas and population groups which it affected, the second movement could be amply documented from refugees in KID in 1980.

Many of those people had originally gone to the Saang-Koh Thom districts south of Phnom Penh in April 1975 and in the second move were sent to Kompong Chhnang, Pursat, and Battambang. One man also related a move by boat up the Tonle Sap and tributary rivers to Rovieng in the far North. Their stories confirmed Ponchaud’s remark that the second deportation was more deadly than the first, both because people were weaker and conditions of travel were harsher; but they contradict Barron’s and Paul’s assertion that no food or water was provided. Neither is it correct, as Ponchaud wrote, that people were generally deceived, being told that they were to return to Phnom Penh. Many in fact volunteered, believing they would find better conditions, or an easier escape route in Battambang. As for

numbers affected, Ponchaud wrote of ‘hundreds of thousands,’ a 1976 news story based on refugee accounts put forward a figure of 300,000, and in an earlier critique of the STV on this point I suggested that 400,000 would have been the absolute maximum, which still seems consonant with the various impressionistic refugee accounts.81

Although there were possibilities for changing an assigned route in April 1975, particularly for those who had a rural home to which they were returning, most Phnom Penh residents would have seen little reason to change, particularly since they believed the evacuation was temporary. Even had they known it was to be permanent, they might not have seen much reason in choosing one zone over another, unless their goal was to reach Battambang, known as a rice-surplus area little touched by war. With the exception of one region of Battambang, that would have been an infelicitous choice, for most of that province, like the rest of the country, evolved in ways which would not have been predicted and which resulted in wide differences in living conditions among the various zones and regions.

A major purpose of the description which follows is to emphasize and try to explain those differences, some of which became apparent to Phnom Penh residents early in the evacuation.

It is first essential to note that some of the areal differences in DK had their roots in the prewar history of the country and are to that extent independent of communist policy. Among such independent

variables are both objective economic and demographic circumstances and political-administrative conditions.

Cambodia had always depended first of all on its agriculture, and after the war of 1970-75 rehabilitation and further development were even more necessary, with an important policy innovation in the DK effort to put nearly the entire population into productive agricultural work. Given such a policy of creating new peasants, perhaps over one million of them, by fiat, it is important to note that very little of the total Cambodian land area was of good agricultural quality, and that even within the prewar cultivated area there were significant differences in soil quality and rice yield. Some of the richest soil was in Tuk Meas, Kampot (Damban 35), and in Monkolborei, Battambang (Damban 3), with very high yields in Phnom Sampeou (Damban 3) and also in Suong, Kompong Cham (Damban 41).

The poorest soil and yield were perhaps in Kompong Speu (Dambans 32, 33) and in parts of Kompong Thom, with relatively poor soils in much of Takeo province (Dambans 13, 33) as well.82

Taking the statistics for 1967-68, the last which are more or less reliable, and reworking them to fit the DK zones, we see that the areally small Southwest was the most populous and had over twice as many people as the much larger Northwest or Center, and nearly 30% more than the enormous combined North-Center area. The East, another small zone, was 50% more populous than the Northwest, and also slightly more populous than the combined North and Center.

When these population figures are compared with those for gross production of rice, we see that the Northwest and East produced nearly identical quantities in 1966-67, while the very populous Southwest produced only slightly more. In terms of a rice-to-people ratio, the Southwest just before the war was the least favored zone.83

The rich parts of Battambang not only had some of the best lands and highest yields, but also the most important concentration of large proprietors and a peasantry which may have been better off than those in the crowded Southwest.

Superimposed on such basic economic facts were aspects of prewar politics which are relevant for an understanding of Democratic Kampuchea.

During the first Indochina war of 1945-54 most of the military action in Cambodia, and the greatest concentration of communist activity and organization against the French, was in the provinces which later formed the East and Southwest Zones and the part of Kompong Cham north of the river in the Center Zone. Those were also the places where reprisals were taken in the form of forced regroupment of peasant villages, in particular in Kompong Cham, Kampot, and Takeo.84 It would not be surprising if such actions left a residue of resentment against urban Cambodia, whose officials had cooperated with the French; and in many other parts of the country, isolated

peasants were unfamiliar with towns and townfolk, whose ways seemed quite foreign to them.

During the war of 1970-75 the East and Southwest were again, as during the first war, the scene of much military action; and communist organization and administration got an early start. In contrast, wealthy Battambang, in spite of its revolutionary Samlaut district, remained formally in Republican hands until the very end; and if Phnom Penh's authority outside the main towns of the province was very weak, it was also difficult for the communists to set up an effective administration. Thus the province with the greatest potential social contradictions had, in 1975, the largest number of Republican supporters outside Phnom Penh, and also the weakest local communist organization.

Another historical point which needs emphasis is the special character of the East. For reasons which have not been completely determined and which cannot be explored here, the East Zone communists, more than those of any other zone, represented the tradition of the Indochina Communist Party and the first Cambodian communist group which was split from it in 1951. Many of the top cadres had been part of that group, and after 1954 they either went to Vietnam or worked with the legal Pracheachon Group until 1962. They had therefore grown up politically in close contact with Vietnamese communism, and, as subsequent events have shown, they maintained a certain sympathy for Vietnamese methods, and close relations with Vietnam, which was in sharp contrast to the Southwest Zone communists and Pol Pot.85

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The bourgeois refugees who have provided most of the information used here describe the zones and regions of Democratic Kampuchea generally as ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ with occasional use of ‘very bad’ and, rarely, ‘very good’; and the distinctions are made on the basis of two major considerations - number of executions and quantity of food. A ‘very good’ place would have been one in which there were very few executions except for acts which would have been criminal in normal circumstances and where food supplies were such that severe undernourishment was never a problem. Such places did exist, even if they were very few. Parts of Damban 3 in Battambang fell into that category, as well as some of the more productive parts of the East, part of Damban 15 near Ponhea Lu’ just north of Phnom Penh, and even random villages in other zones where conditions in general were considered bad.

Another feature of the good or very good areas was the generally benign attitude of the cadres, something which is noted especially for Damban 3, parts of the East, and the Kratie Damban 505. Of course, where food was plentiful, people could work better, disciplinary infractions were less frequent, and the cadres could afford to adopt a more tolerant attitude and treat breaches of regulations more lightly. Such a correlation, however, was not

universal, for Pin Yathay reported decent cadres even in one of the worst areas of all, Damban 6 of Pursat, and one of my informants from Damban 4 in Battambang said she had never known a cadre whom she had considered a 'bad person.'86

The ‘bad’ areas, before 1978, were of two distinct types. First there were the hitherto undeveloped areas, often forested, into which ‘new’ people were dumped to clear and plant land or build irrigation works, dependent on external supplies of rice. Usually there were shocking death tolls from hunger and illness, even where executions were few. Perhaps the absolutely worst areas of this type were Dambans 2, 5, and 6. The second type of bad area was where death from hunger might not have been a major problem, but where executioners ran riot. The absolutely worst place of that type before 1978 may have been the Prey Chhor district of Damban 41, former Kompong Cham province in the North-Center Zone, which may also have been the worst zone in that respect, even though there were great differences even among contiguous villages.

Refugee reports about hunger are almost always couched in terms of the rice ration, reflecting the Cambodian folk notion that nourishment comes first of all from white rice; and it is clear that at times or in certain places there were provisions which, depending on quantity, could have provided much better nourishment than the rice diet everyone preferred. For example, some people report being ‘forced’ to eat unattractive mixtures of corn, water, morning glory, and banana flowers, all of which are extremely nourishing; and they

occasionally disdained to eat such things even though they could have been taken for consumption.

In assessing such reports, it is necessary to distinguish between lack of rice and presence of malnutrition or starvation. Often the two coexisted, but not always. Just as has been discovered about post-1979 Cambodia, where peasants who truthfully report that no foreign aid rice has been delivered to their villages may still be able to feed adequately on the natural abundance of the land, so in the DK period too there were places where lack of rice was compensated by supplies of corn, fish, or game.87

A second dimension of the variability in quality of life in Democratic Kampuchea was the temporal; and the changes most frequently represented a decline, either steadily or at some sharp point, usually in 1977-1978. The most dramatic, of course, was the great purge of the East after May 1978 when one of the best large areas suddenly became one of the worst. Other such changes were associated with other purges in the Northwest and North, mostly in 1977, although those changes were not all of a kind, as I shall discuss below. There were also temporary ups and downs resulting from vagaries in food production and distribution, and occasionally central policy decisions which affected the status, and thus the quality of life, of large segments of the population.

When the refugee accounts of life in different parts of the country are collated and compared, it is possible to infer some general patterns in overall living conditions and general policies; and, where available,

the remarks of former cadres concur in the picture derived from the information of the ‘new’ people.

The Southwestern and Eastern Zones, the most important centers of pre-1970 communist activity, were the best organized and most consistently administered, with the East, until its destruction in 1978, also providing the more favorable conditions of life, in particular for ‘new’ people. In contrast, the West, the Northwest, except for Damban 3, and most of the North-Center, were considered ‘bad’ areas, where food was often short, cadres arbitrary and murderous, and policy rationales entirely beyond the ken of the general populace.

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## Southwest

The Southwest is the most significant zone with which to begin a survey of Democratic Kampuchea, since it turned out to be the zone of ‘Pol Pot-ism’ par excellence, the power base of the Pol Pot central government; and its influence, after 1976, gradually spread out to encompass the entire country.

The original Southwest - Takeo, Kampot, Kompong Chhnang, Kompong Speu, Koh Kong - was the poorest agricultural zone in Cambodia, where economic conditions were deteriorating even in the

1950s, and because of this a revolutionary program based on the poor peasants and involving rapid collectivization with maximum reliance on manual labor at a low subsistence level would have the greatest likelihood of success.88 Damban 25, however, comprised much rich rice and garden land along the Bassac and Mekong rivers, and the different conditions appear clearly in some of the refugee evidence.

The revolutionary transformation of the Southwest began as early as 1971, and one of the first analyses of the Cambodian revolution based on refugee evidence was a study specifically of that zone, even though the author did not realize it at the time.

Between 1970 and 1974, Kenneth Quinn of the U.S. State Department gathered material from Cambodian refugees in South Vietnam which he published in 1976; and he believed he was studying the entire south of Cambodia adjacent to Vietnam and comprising Military Region (MR) 405 (Dambans 35, 13), MR 607 (Damban 25), and MR 203 (Dambans 23, 24).89 The purpose of his report was to show how “a small but dedicated force was able to impose a revolution on a society without widespread participation of the peasantry,” and he concluded, not surprisingly, "that a revolution can be accomplished by a small group of dedicated cadres, despite the absence of grievances sufficiently serious to motivate the peasantry to participate."90

Quinn was thus well within the mainstream of American opinion, both official and popular, which holds that Communists must be

‘outside agitators’ who impose unwanted changes on unsuspecting peasants and workers, not to mention the wealthier classes.

This is not the aspect of Quinn’s study which I wish to emphasize here, but it is essential to point out that Quinn’s Southwest, where "the peasantry was opposed to almost all of the KK [Khmer Krahom] programs,"91 seems to be a quite different place from Heder’s - and more contradictory, since Quinn, in spite of his main themes, was honest enough to note that many of the Communists’ night propaganda meetings “were usually styled as happy events,” that peasant youth returned from short training courses full of enthusiasm, and that after some of the land reforms “production has outstripped previous individual efforts,” with some of the surplus being used "to feed other groups whose harvest was insufficient."92

What is important to note here is that the revolutionary measures which Quinn describes, and which with one exception seem confirmed by other sources, constituted the revolution as carried out according to Southwestern Zone policy, and with only a couple of exceptions Quinn’s identifiable evidence all comes from districts within the old Southwest. Indeed, he describes how in Svay Rieng province (East Zone) the Communists, on seeing that there would be much popular resistance there to the type of radical program being undertaken in the Southwest, modified their policy; and virtually all the post-1979 refugees confirm that there were major differences in the two zones all through the DK period. The exception in Quinn’s description which does not find confirmation in other reports is his insistence on the widespread relocation of villages with complete

uprooting of the population, which he sees as prefiguring the deportation of urban populations in 1975. Such must have happened on occasion, but it cannot have been very widespread, since urban deportees to the Southwest, including Damban 25, all speak of seeing, or residing in villages of ‘base’ people in old locations. In this question of evacuation we must distinguish, moreover, between peasant villages and market towns, which, like Ang Tassom, were sometimes evacuated before 1975, perhaps misleading Quinn in his analysis.93

For each case of an uprooted, relocated village one would wish to know more of the precise circumstances. A major fault of Quinn’s study is that it considers the Communist program entirely in abstraction from what was happening generally in Cambodia in those years. We would never know that some villages were being uprooted and relocated by B-52’s or because the front line between two opposing armies passed through or near them; and we would never imagine that the austerity measures detailed by Quinn might have been an absolutely necessary minimum in such wartime conditions. As for a resistant peasantry which had to be kept in line by brute force, how do we explain the tens of thousands of peasant youth who volunteered to fight in spite of 50% casualties?94

Most of the refugees from the Northwest who passed through the Southwest first seem to have gone from Phnom Penh to Damban 25, the Saang-Koh Thom area as they call it. This was perhaps mere chance in the confusion of the deportation, perhaps deliberate in the knowledge that it was an area well-supplied with food. It was also

well-supplied with people of its own, which is probably the reason why so many of the new arrivals were later sent elsewhere.

Saang-Koh Thom was the destination of one of B/P's main characters and his family, who managed to proceed that far in a car well-stocked with provisions; and the account in B/P, undoubtedly reflecting the gross propaganda character of that work, bears little resemblance to other reports from the same area. Thus "the family walked [sic] southward … through forsaken, ghostly villages," and were finally ordered to settle in Kohr [Koh] Thom, from which the communists had "routed the original inhabitants" and where "every three months or so they brought in new residents and expelled the old."95 As we shall see, this is all quite misleading, and must derive more from Quinn, an early version of whose report B/P were privileged to consult, more than from direct testimony by the refugees. Another inaccuracy is that the weekly rice ration was only 500 grams, and that it came from captured American rice.96

Much more useful as a description of conditions in Damban 25 in 1975, and immeasurably more honest, is the account of Pin Yathay, a Phnom Penh resident of the same class as B/P's heroes, who wrote that part of his book on his own.

The first few villages just outside Phnom Penh were indeed deserted because, as Yathay carefully notes, of the recent combat. By the time his family reached Saang, a zone held by the communists for some time, they saw that "the populace had not been deported and the houses were intact."

At Prek Toch, near Saang, the city deportees were “well received” and sheltered in the houses of the local people themselves. Even the rich peasants had not lost their property, and it was in the large house of one of them that Yathay’s group of twenty-three people was able to take shelter together.97

Such were the conditions in all the villages of the region, according to Yathay. The original peasants still occupied their own houses and worked the same land as before, and the ‘new’ people from the city were distributed among them.

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Like B/P’s family, Yathay also went on to Koh Thom, “a small, rather rich port [where] the soil was fertile and many fish were caught.” Unfortunately he was unable to remain there, for his family was too large to be accommodated in any of the local houses. Proceeding to a village just 7 kilometers farther south, they stopped for the night. “The reception seemed warmer than in the other stops,” and they were well fed with fish soup and a "sufficient quantity of rice."98 Yathay’s main worry was that the $3,000 he was carrying would be discovered and confiscated.

He and his family spent about three months in that village, and the food seems always to have been adequate, if not luxurious. They “didn’t have to worry about daily rations [which were] sufficient to allow [them] to think of extras” obtained in trade with the local villagers, the original inhabitants, who “were rich” with "soap, chickens, ducks, eggs, and fruit."99

Yathay and his family were even given a house of their own, which he regarded as "a privilege to live alone, to get away from cohabitation with the peasants."100 Of course, Yathay and the other city people had to work in the fields like peasants, which they found exhausting at first, and he mentions many deaths from illness, but besides the adequate food they seem to have been treated fairly, and there was no killing. Discipline was via self-criticism and reeducation; and those who tried to work hard, like Yathay, were well considered.

He left that place voluntarily when in July 1975 people were offered the chance to return to their native districts, and he hoped to reach Oudong, in Kompong Speu province, which had been his parents’ home. On the way he spent a week in Prek Taduong, another village in Damban 25, where they had nothing to do and were again well nourished. He noticed that the ‘new’ and base people worked together, and that work discipline seemed easier than where he had been before, which he attributed to the fact that the DK cadres were all local people working with their old friends and neighbors.101

After that week of rest, his next move took him into Damban 33 in the old Southwest, where he found many things quite different, and

where we shall take up his story later on in the discussion of that region.

A similar description of life in Saang-Koh Thom was provided by a former schoolteacher whom I met in Khao I Dang and whose account of conditions en route to Saang was cited above. Rice supplies were adequate, and they could also forage for other food or trade for it with peasants along the road.102 On reaching the Saang area K.K. was able to choose the village in which he wished to settle and was given over a month to build living quarters.

In contrast to Yathay, who lived among old peasant villagers, he was in a settlement organized around 'new' people, and in the beginning of May they were divided into 60-person groups (komrong), but work discipline was easy and there was no brutality. One milk can of rice per person was issued daily by the authorities, but they were free to forage or trade for other food, and nourishment was not a serious problem. In July, the time when the authorities in Yathay's village asked for volunteers to move elsewhere, there was an economic reorganization and conditions became more difficult. The komrong were merged in cooperatives, and adolescents over the age of 13 were taken to a dam construction site where the work was hard, food short, illness common, and death from unexploded ordnance left over from the war a constant danger. There was still, though, no killing. Within the cooperative where the adults stayed, the main work was clearing swamps to make new rice fields.

This involved the removal of large quantities of trakuon (water morning glory), a common Southeast Asian vegetable which is extremely nourishing but in Cambodia considered somewhat low-class. K.K. said they were free to eat as much of it as they wished, but generally didn't, in spite of what he said were otherwise short rations, because they didn't like it.

In October K.K. became ill with malaria and was allowed to rest at home until January 1976. He was given treatment with traditional medicine and was able to buy some Nivaquine from other refugees. When he recovered he was put to work chasing sparrows away from the rice fields for two weeks and then returned to heavy manual labor. He soon became ill again with fever, but this time, he said, the cadres thought he was malingering. In any case, he was caught up at that point in the 'second deportation' and sent to Battambang province in the Northwest Zone.

It is worth noting that K.K.'s story was given to me during a conversation at which several other refugees were present, with none of them registering any objection to the relatively benign depiction of life in a DK region, but that in his written account destined for the American Embassy in Bangkok, there was no mention of these experiences in Damban 25.

Still another statement about Saang-Koh Thom was provided by a former medical corpsman of the Republican army who spent about six months there after April 1975. He also considered that there was plenty of food, and little killing - not even of former military personnel,

all of which he attributed to the circumstance that many of the DK officials were former teachers, therefore moderates.103

All of this information was from urban evacuees who by early 1976 had been transferred to the Northwest in the ‘second deportation’ and in 1979 had taken the opportunity to flee to Thailand.

Although they remembered the Saang-Koh Thom area of Damban 25 as a relatively benign place, in fact for some of them very nearly a rural elysium in comparison with what they experienced later, they had no knowledge of its development in the following years.

Subsequent information from five people - four men, former teachers who had joined the revolution before 1975 and a girl from the ‘new’ people - all of whom had spent the entire DK period in the Koh Thom area, revealed that food supply had always been sufficient - “there was no starvation there; all deaths were from killing.” The killings, according to them, had also been few before 1977, mostly officers and officials from Phnom Penh, but during 1977-78 the number of executions, both of ‘new’ and base people, rose sharply and working conditions became much more difficult.104

Those are details which will become increasingly relevant, and are also not surprising in Damban 25 which, as a region of contention between the East and the Southwest, would have been more than usually subject to intra-party conflict. It is clear from Non Suon’s confessions that

Damban 25 and some of its old cadres were suspect in the eyes of the Pol Pot faction, and in the statements by the revolutionary teachers noted above, the changes in living conditions in 1977 clearly coincided with the destruction of the old cadres who had begun running the area with Non Suon before 1975.

One of them who figures in a list of important cadres killed at Tuol Sleng was Som Chia, then Damban Secretary, arrested on March 25, 1977, and a member of the old pre-1960 communist group who, after 1975, were most numerous in the East.105 It is interesting to compare the above information, from urban evacuees, with views of Damban 25 expressed by some other DK personnel.

They also saw that living standards there were relatively high because of soil fertility and proximity to the river.

For them this was not an unmixed blessing, though, because it meant that there were relatively few poor peasants, the basis for the revolution, and many rich and middle peasants. As a result there was in their view more contradiction among classes, opposition to organizational work, and less unity within the cooperatives. Cooperative organization began in mid-1973 and was at that time voluntary, becoming compulsory only after April 1975, which meant that the rich peasants did not join. Most of the poor, who formed 40% of the population, were satisfied with cooperatives and joined willingly. There was no production quota set from above, and surpluses were exchanged among cooperatives. Damban 25, richer

in corn than in rice, sent corn to Dambans 13, 15, and 33; while Damban 33 sent rice back in return.106

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At the end of the war, according to the same informants, the people of Damban 25 were not told to prepare for evacuees until April 18. Then each district was assigned a quota and told to prepare food to feed them. At that time they were informed that the evacuation was temporary, and that only military officers and civilians of high official rank were to be considered enemies.

Damban 25 was bordered on the west by Damban 33 and, south of it, Damban 13 of the original Southwest Zone. When Pin Yathay left Prek Taduong in the belief that he was on the way to his parents' home in Oudong, the truck in which he was riding had not gone more than 10 km when it abruptly turned westward into the forest, where they spent the night. On the following day they continued on to Sramar Leav, in Takeo province, Damban 33, "famous for its resistance to the republican [Lon Nol] regime … the toughest sanctuary of the Khmer Rouge movement."107

Yathay immediately noticed a change from Damban 25.

It was clear that discipline was more strict, yet "the cadres of Sramar Leav seemed better educated … they expressed themselves in clear and coherent language … [they] had intensified village discipline, but had adapted, with considerable perception, their methods to the new population of urbanites."108 As in Saang-Koh Thom the original peasants, pace Quinn, still occupied their houses and fields. “The Khmer Rouge village unit was planned on the basis of the old communities.” The ‘new’ people were assigned to different sections of the village according to their social and professional backgrounds - civil servants in one place, businessmen in another, etc. Interestingly, there was a section for Lon Nol military; and later on, in August, Yathay met a cadre whose job was the reeducation of a group of over 200 officers, also grouped together, which indicates that in Damban 33, at least, there had not yet been any implementation of a policy to exterminate Republican military personnel.109

Here also the old peasants were relatively rich, with plenty of food, and not yet subject to a collectivist regime, in contrast to the urban exiles who, possessing no property, were forced to live communally. Everyone was put to work in traditional peasant labor, which the city people still found exhausting, there were no longer regular days of rest as in Damban 25, and for the first time Yathay saw evidence of secret, inexplicable executions. Food does not seem to have been a major problem, since “paddy was distributed in sufficient quantity,” even though they had to mill it themselves; and they were allowed to plant small private vegetable plots and to raise chickens and ducks

for their own use.110 In fact Yathay's principal complaint was that city intellectuals were forced to live and work as peasants.

Part of his objections were quite reasonable; he relates how they spoiled the construction of a new dam, on which he, as an hydraulics engineer, could have given pertinent advice. But advice from city intellectuals was not tolerated; everyone was supposed to learn from experience. In any case, even though strong enough to do the work, and adequately fed, he found peasant life intolerable; and this impelled him, after three months in Sramar Leav, to volunteer for a new move to Battambang in the hope that from there it would be possible to escape across the Thai border.

Other reports from Damban 33 vary in their assessment. In one of the first to be published, the former medical student cited above said that the northern part of the damban, former province of Kompong Speu, where he spent some time in 1975, was well-cultivated and that the old peasants had enough food, but the evacuees suffered from hunger, receiving a daily ration of only one-half can of rice. Like Yathay, though, he noticed two villages full of Lon Nol soldiers who had not been executed, but were put to work in the fields.111

A former law student who had first returned to his home in southern Takeo (Damban 13) was transferred in 1977 to the southern part of Damban 33 in the former district of Tram Kak. There he worked in a so-called model district. Work there was as hard, perhaps harder, than where he had been before, but all regulations as to rice distribution, butchering of animals for meat, rest days, etc., were

followed precisely, so that starvation was not a problem. As for discipline, it was just as harsh for DK cadre as for the new people, particularly with respect to the prohibition of extramarital sexual relations. Executions were most frequent in 1977-78, which as we shall see was true in many parts of the country and was the result of intraparty factional conflict.

This informant was particularly interesting as a law student, thus an intellectual, who in April 1975 had returned to his home in Kirivong, Damban 13, an old communist base area where he could not hope to hide his identity. Most people in his village, including his parents, part Chinese, were classified as base people, although his father was of the lowest category (Depositee) and he himself, coming from Phnom Penh, was considered 'new.'

Although he worked in the fields, he did not report any particular mistreatment; his father, a carpenter constructing houses, carts, etc., was well-treated, and his entire family survived. Once he was sick for three months, was left at home to rest, and was not suspected of malingering because he had worked well before.112

Another former student spent the DK period in the northern part of Damban 13, in Tram Kak near the border of Damban 33. He lived in a village of about 800 people of whom about one quarter were base people and the rest new. As elsewhere the base people were better off, with more food which they ate separately from the new people. This man felt that life was very bad, and offered some quantitative estimates which are typical of the STV in their contradictions. Thus

of the 800 people in his village in the beginning, he estimated that 50% died of hunger and many others were executed, leaving only 100 in 1979. But in another context he said that by 1978 the population was about equally divided among base and new people with a total population of 3,300 in a cooperative of 4 villages, or an average of over 800 per village as in the beginning. Neither would one expect the loss implied by his two estimates to have occurred in 1978 alone, since he said that the worst year for executions was 1976-77, due to factional disputes, while in 1978 rations were equalized and in general improved following a change of policy, with a large public meeting at which it was announced that base and new people were equal.

The change was related to preparations for the expected war with Vietnam; and when they attacked he fled from the DK authorities along with 4 other former intellectuals, a doctor, a medical assistant, a teacher, and a law student, whose survival fits well with other stories from the Southwest. 113

Some of these details are confirmed and others amplified by another report from a nearby cooperative in Damban 13. Thon, as a former law student, was also sensitive to the situation of intellectuals under the DK regime, and he stated that in the Southwest people were not killed simply because they had been doctors, teachers, or students, that only Lon Nol military were in danger because of their past, while others were executed if they resisted.

He also noted that in 1977 there was much killing as the result of party struggles, but this, as everywhere, affected DK cadres more than new people. As for food, 1976 was bad, 1977 better, and 1978 worst, with some starvation, which is different from the situation in the neighboring district described above. Thon himself spent most of 1975-78 in 'prison,' because he was suspected of political involvement in the Lon Nol government (incidentally true). The prison was in fact a labor camp on a mountain where conditions were more difficult than in a normal village, and only men without families were sent there. After the purge of the East Zone in 1978 there were meetings to inform the population of So Phim's 'revolt,' which was labelled 'revisionist,' and they were warned not to imitate that tendency. There was also a meeting in late 1978 to announce the equality of base and new people, but according to Thon conditions did not really change much.114

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As in Damban 25, former DK personnel report that cooperative organization was begun in Damban 13 in mid-1973. In contrast to the former, the population of Damban 13 was in majority poor and middle peasants with very few rich. At first it was voluntary, then in 1974 pressure was applied to get everyone into the cooperatives, in which only poor and middle peasants were supposed to hold office. The source of this information claimed they got everyone in without

bloodshed, even though the rich peasants were dissatisfied. In the first cooperative harvest in 1974 the total production was no higher than before, but distribution was better and surpluses were transferred from one place to another according to need. As for the evacuation, it was not announced in that area in advance. The official line on the new people was that they were “not all enemies,” but at the local level in Damban 13 they decided that those who could not adjust and who created difficulties should be arrested.115

Moving westward from Dambans 33 and 13 we come to 35, which included most of Kampot province. An interesting informant from that area was Van, a native of Chhouk in northern Kampot, who in 1975 was majoring in French in the School of Pedagogy and at the same time attending courses" in the Phnom Penh law school.116 When the evacuation order came, he decided to go home and reached Chhouk in about 10 days. Part of Chhouk had for years been a communist stronghold, and according to Van there was a clear difference between villagers north and south of the road from Chhouk to the town of Kampot. The north side was the old communist region, and villagers there generally disliked city folk. The people south of the road were also peasants, but more in touch with town life and less radical. Although Van’s own home was on the north side, his relatives advised him not to stay there since he had been away for several years in Phnom Penh and might attract hostility. After a short visit with his parents, he then moved to less dangerous country on the south side.

There he was assigned normal village work, in a cooperative of about 2,200 people, and at various times he carried earth to make rice plots, netted fish, gathered vegetables, worked as a carpenter and housebuilder, drove carts, and planted rice. Although his background as teacher and university student was known, he had no trouble because he worked well. Moreover, disciplinary policy in his district had been clearly spelled out, and people were not killed just for having been teachers, civil servants, professionals, or even Lon Nol military (compare Yathay and Sak Sau above). Those guilty of illicit love affairs, one of the most serious offenses in some regions, were not sentenced to death here, but to hard labor or imprisonment. The 'crimes' which were punishable by death were laziness, resistance, even verbal, to policy or instructions, and boasting or pretension, that is, refusal to adopt in every way the manners and attitudes of simple peasants. Of the 6-700 new people in his cooperative Van remembered about 30 executions between 1975 and 1979, including 1 doctor, 9 teachers, 8 officers, and several businessmen.

Four surviving doctors were known to him by name, and at least three had gone to work in Phnom Penh for the new Salvation Front government. In Van's birthplace, however, in an admittedly more hostile environment for evacuees, he heard that of 79 adult male new people, only 2 survived. The cadres in Van's cooperative were all local people, which in many other places also meant relatively benign conditions,117 and the low ratio of new people to total population would contribute to that situation too. There was no lack of food and no starvation; and Van was even of the opinion that there had been

no starvation in the Southwest at all. This is probably not true, even though the Southwest was one of the better zones in this respect.

Medical services and schools existed, but of revolutionary type. Van himself was hospitalized twice, and found that the medical personnel were youngsters of poor peasant background trained by a revolutionary doctor who had studied with Vietnamese guerilla medics before 1975. Most medicine consisted of traditional preparations with coconut milk used for serum and locally made vitamin C.118 They also occasionally had foreign medicine, such as Aureomycin made in China and serum from France, but due to lack of care in sterilization there were many abscesses following injections. Medical centers ('hospitals') were established at cooperative, district (srok) and damban levels, with foreign medicine used at the srok hospital, and probably also in the damban center, although Van had not met anyone who went there.

The school personnel were also poor peasants with minimal education themselves. All children over 5 years of age were supposed to acquire basic literacy along with work education, but according to Van the literacy was neglected and such children were still illiterate in 1979.

Beginning in 1977 contingents of Southwest cadres and base people spread out to take over administration in most other zones, generally following purges of local cadres. At the end of that year about 500 from Van's cooperative, of whom no more than ten were new people, were sent to a part of Kandal province in the East Zone near the

Vietnamese border because the population there was largely Chinese and not considered very loyal. In January 1979 most of the base people of that group returned to Chhouk and reported that all had survived, with the few new people preferring to return to Phnom Penh after the destruction of the DK government. They complained that the border area to which they had been sent was prone to flooding, with poor rice crops, and they didn't wish to remain there.119

Van was a somewhat unusual informant in the relatively positive slant of his information about life in Democratic Kampuchea, but he was also unusual as a person with university education who had maintained close links with his peasant background, which, moreover, was in an old radical community.120

Perhaps because of this, his entire family of 5 brothers and 5 sisters survived. One is now a peasant in Kompong Trach and another is a factory worker in Phnom Penh.

Another of Van's friends from Kampot had also gone to the university in Phnom Penh, before 1975 had worked as a French language teacher, and at the end of the war had also returned home. He, however, had come from 'south of the road' and did not hesitate to claim that his area was more civilized than that to the north. When asked about the DK period, he affirmed that it had been very bad, with a lot of brutality and killing. This, it turned out, was his judgment, since, when pinned down to specific facts, he was in agreement with Van.121

A somewhat different experience in the Chhouk area was related by an agricultural engineer, also a native, who took a month to get home after April 1975, and was then imprisoned for 6 months at Phnom La-ang, which Van described as the damban central prison. The prison was not a special building, but simply a penned enclosure, and the prisoners were not chained or otherwise physically constrained. The reason for his imprisonment was probably the relatively high positions he had held before 1975. After prison he spent one year in a place which he described as an oberom, “education,” which would appear to have been a reeducation center for intellectuals whom the CPK at the time expected to be able to make use of later, although he denied that such was its purpose. Most of the people there, however, were intellectuals, with a few base peasants mixed with them; and according to Non Suon, a member of the first postwar DK government, that place was a holding center for intellectuals of uncertain reliability.122 Among the inmates known to my informant were Son Sen’s brother, Son Nhoeng, a former government district officer, and an unnamed person, an important prewar intellectual, who had been a communist supporter in Phnom Penh before 1975. Those with families could keep them together and they were able to spend every night at home. Food was sufficient and each group (kong) caught their own fish for the communal meals. The total population of the center was about 500, 90% of whom were evacuees, and there were few executions. Political education was given importance, with 2-3 hours every evening devoted to it.

At the end of 1976 he ‘graduated’ from the center and was assigned to a normal cooperative in Ang Romik, which was one of eight cooperatives surrounding the reeducation center, with about 3,000 people in each. Conditions there deteriorated year by year, with about 30% of the people suffering from starvation; and in 1977 and 1978 there were many executions, apparently due to factional conflict. In 1977 there was a major purge in Chhouk, during which the chief of the reeducation center and its entire administrative committee including the informant’s wife, a teacher, were arrested and presumed executed. The informant himself was not troubled, but no explanation was offered to him for his wife’s arrest. He believes that there was some kind of anti-Pol Pot movement which was suppressed, and that about 10,000 people were arrested in Chhouk at the time. (Van, when asked, remembered a purge, but was astonished at the estimate of 10,000.) Among the victims was the pro-communist intellectual mentioned above and his wife.123

This account differs significantly from that of Van, but it is also from a special place, where most of the population were apparently new, a circumstance in which living conditions were often relatively bad in all zones. I would also suggest that S.K.H. was less than frank in claiming ignorance of the purpose of the education center, in particular of his wife’s role in its committee, and of the reasons for the purge in which she was a victim.

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Another, somewhat more negative, report from the Chhouk area is that of Mrs. K.D., an attractive, well-educated woman of the former urban bourgeoisie whose husband had gone to France before the end of the war.

In her cooperative, at Srae Knong, food was adequate throughout the DK period, but there was much illness, especially malaria. In 1975 there was no killing, in 1976-77 rather much (the purge mentioned by S.K.H .? ), and at the “end of 1977” an order from higher authorities to stop executions and make base and new people equal. There was a meeting to announce the new policy, and even before the meeting, word was passed privately by the base people to their acquaintances among the new. Comparison with other reports suggests that Mrs. K.D. erred in her dates, a rather common circumstance among the refugees, who had no paper, written news sources, or calendars for over three years. The change of policy was probably in late 1978, as mentioned by other sources, just before the war with Vietnam; and perhaps the worst period for executions was during 1977. Mrs. K.D. estimated that at Srae Knong, base people slightly outnumbered the new; and that during the DK period 90% of the new men were killed. A bit of guesswork and extrapolation from this suggests that if the cooperative had the usual 3,000 population, 1,400 might have been ‘new,’ with approximately 700 males and 350 adult men, of whom 315 would have been killed; and if her guess of 90% requires the same modification as many other such estimates, the number would have to be reduced considerably.124

One more refugee from Damban 35 was a former Phnom Penh worker and Republican soldier who spent the entire DK period in the khum of Kantho, Kompong Trach, south of Chhouk. He estimated the khum population at about 7,000 (1962 census, 6,916), of whom nearly two-thirds were new; and in this connection we should remember the account of Tep, who spoke of the effects of the war in Kampot province with tens of thousands of young volunteers suffering up to 50% casualties. Our informant considered conditions there to be bad, with the base and new separated and receiving different treatment. Hunger, he said, was common, and executions numbered perhaps 70-80 people in his cooperative. The worst time was 1975-76, and after that things improved. Although he was unhappy with conditions in Damban 35, when he was able to return to his home in Maung in the Northwest, in 1979, he learned from his relatives that life there had been much worse than what he had experienced.125

Van's comment on this last account was that conditions in Kompong Trach had indeed been rougher, because it was near the border and many new people tried to flee across to Vietnam. He remembered that in late 1975, many new people had been brought from Kompong Trach to Chhouk to prevent them from trying to escape.

On the basis of these refugee accounts of life in different parts of the Southwest it is possible to infer certain aspects of general policy and overall conditions, which is particularly important in this case since

the Southwest turned out to be the ‘Pol Pot’ zone par excellence and gradually spread its influence out over the entire country.

First, it seems that, contrary to the STV, there was no policy to exterminate intellectuals, or professionals, or even Lon Nol officers, in general; or if such instructions had been issued from central authorities, they were not implemented in the Southwest.

I include this qualification because Van, one of the most careful reporters I met among the refugees, and who was relatively positive toward life in Democratic Kampuchea, claimed that during the first six months after April 1975 orders had been issued from Phnom Penh to kill urban evacuees indiscriminately. He had obtained this information from an elder brother, a base peasant, whose son and Van’s nephew was a high-ranking DK officer who worked at the Phnom Penh airport after the end of the war. Later, during a trip home to visit his family, he mentioned the execution order and said that it had been countermanded in October 1975 by another order forbidding lower levels of cadre to kill at all without instructions from above.126

What seems most likely to have happened is that the central DK authorities at first gave local cadres complete discretion to deal with urban evacuees as they saw fit, as was reported in one of the early accounts to reach the outside world.127 Such was indeed the specific explanation obtained by one of my best Eastern Zone informants from the cadres in his area;128 and it accounts for the very different treatment meted out in different parts of the country. In

the Southwest the worst periods of executions seem not to have been directed at ‘new’ people, but intraparty purges, which of course always caught some of the ‘new’ people as well.

With respect to general living conditions, including quantity of food, starvation does not seem to have been a serious problem in the Southwest, although it did occur at certain places and times. Contrary to Quinn, most base peasants seem to have been unrelocated, well supplied with food, and not inimical to the regime. As for the new evacuees from the towns, their circumstances as a group depended on the agricultural wealth of the particular locality, the ratio of new to base people, and the degree of class hatred felt by the latter; and as individuals their fate was bound up in their ability to work and behave like ordinary peasants. Life was best where a small number of new were thoroughly mixed with the old, and worst where a large community of new people was segregated from the base population. Best of all were food-rich places like Koh Thom, where the evacuees shared base peasants’ houses under cadres who were local people.129

Beyond what has been noted above, the Heder interviews of DK personnel do not include specific information about conditions in individual dambans or smaller areas, but they claim that throughout the DK period the Southwest as a whole was the most important supplier of rice for the deficit areas of the rest of the country. This, together with the evidence of urban refugees that starvation was not generally a problem, indicates some success in the DK agricultural reorganization.

Another aspect of politics in the Southwest on which these ex-cadres provide some detail is the career of the top man, ‘Ta Mok.’

A native of the Ang Tassom area near the border of Dambans 13 and 33, ‘Mok’ had been an Issarak and early supporter of the communists. During the war he was Deputy Secretary of the original Southwest under Chou Chet (although one informant said the positions were the reverse) and in charge of military affairs. After the split of West and Southwest he became Secretary of the latter with ‘Ta Beth,’ another military man, and the top officer in ‘Tep’s’ chain of command, as Deputy. ‘Mok’ had many daughters who married rising political and military cadres, thus expanding his power base; and as his men took over other zones following purges, his influence was extended until, as one man reported, he seemed to be, by 1978, de facto chief of the entire Southwest, West, and North. Certainly he is one of the most important figures in the surviving DK leadership.130

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## The North west

Discussion of the Northwest follows logically upon a description of the Southwest since in late 1975 and early 1976 the ‘second deportation’ brought large numbers of evacuees from the latter to

the former, and in 1977 the Northwest became an early victim of colonization by Southwestern cadres and base people after its own cadres had been purged.

Geographically and economically the Northwest was a zone of extreme contrasts. One of only two provinces where large landholdings were important, 131 part of Battambang had been considered the rice bowl of Cambodia, from which the rest of the country could always count on a surplus; and the Sangke river was a convenient route into the interior from the rich fishing grounds of the Tonle Sap. In the far north, though, were the sullen, anti-urban villagers of Banteay Chhmar, who only wanted to be left alone; and in the far west was Samlaut, where the peasants had been radicalized since the 1940s and in 1967-68 revolted against the demands of Sihanouk's administration. Pursat, to the south, had always been one of the poorest provinces, mostly mountains and forest, with a large number of hill ethnics and some of the most brutally exploited workers of the entire country.132

It was small, ranking twelfth among Cambodia's provinces in 1962, and the population density was also very low, but not surprising given the area's topography. Even lowland Pursat, however, in the districts of Bakan and Krakor, never reached the density of the Battambang rice plains.

Like Damban 25, Battambang also figured prominently in the first published accounts of life in Democratic Kampuchea. But unlike the Southwest, most of Battambang had remained under Republican

Government control until the very end, or if not really under government control, at least not under the full control and organization of the communist forces either. Thus, although as early as 1972 revolutionary personnel (whether real communist or simply anti-Lon Nol is uncertain) visited peasants and schoolteachers as close as 5-10 miles downriver from the city, and a few miles farther out people considered themselves under revolutionary authorities to whom they willingly contributed sons and daughters as soldiers and nurses; those same people were free to visit relatives in Battambang town, as late as 1973 students and teachers from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Phnom Penh could tour the temple of Banteay Chhmar, and on New Year (April) 1972 I was able to journey upriver from Battambang to the temple of Banan.133

One of the reasons for this anomalous situation was that the Battambang military commander, General Sek Sam Iet, had made his own personal armistice with the communist forces, selling, or giving, them arms and access to rice supplies in exchange for formal peace and quiet in the province. Although the official government control outside of the main towns was purely formal, the communists were unable to organize their administration, except in small outlying old base areas such as Samlaut. When the war ended, Battambang, like Phnom Penh, was swollen with refugees, but unlike the situation in Phnom Penh they were mainly prosperous urbanites who had fled Phnom Penh or Siemreap or other towns close to the combat zones. And the communist forces who entered Battambang or Pailin were not cadres with several years of experience in a disciplined revolutionary administration, but guerillas right out of the woods.

Moreover, while the peasants and cadres in the Southwest might have felt a general class dislike for the Phnom Penh elite, most of the latter were personally unknown and perhaps even objects of some pity; but in Battambang the rice merchants, usurers, landlords, and military were known as individuals and the objects of personal grudges.

When the peasant soldiers from Samlaut and other rural places like it came into town in April 1975, they very likely had in mind specific names and faces to which they attached blame for the violence wreaked on their villages in the 1950s and in 1967-68.134

These are some of the reasons why April 1975 in Battambang was marked by atrocities which, because of its proximity to the border, soon reached western publications and stamped the STV on Democratic Kampuchea as a description of all places at all times. There is no doubt that several hundred officers, perhaps in the end several thousands, were killed en masse, and that a number of civilian urbanites died in similar ways.135

Yet even then there were differences. Some refugees had no atrocity stories to tell at all; and some of the residents of Battambang said later, in KID, that life throughout the rest of 1975 was rather easy. Discipline was lax, it was easy to move around, even to run away from a difficult work site to an easier one, and food was not yet communalized.

Some of the nuances peep through even from the grim pages of B/P and Ponchaud. Four brothers and sisters, ‘intellectuals’ from Phnom Penh, arriving in Sisophon weary and sick after the second deportation, were immediately sent to hospitals where conditions were much like Phnom Penh hospitals in the last days of the war, although one would not know this from B/P. In the first hospital, better than some in Phnom Penh, they were given “all the food they desired,” even if real medicine was scarce; and we now know that this relatively good hospital was probably run by a real physician put to proper use under the early Northwest Zone policy. Then they were transferred to another which resembled precisely western journalists’ reports from Phnom Penh in 1975, and where a distraught medic cried out that “we can’t help you! We don’t have any medicine.” Moreover, although only the two brothers needed hospitalization at first, their sisters were freed from work to help care for them.136 Or take the case of a DK effort, apparently sincere, to institute a re-education program for highly qualified intellectuals in order to convert them to the new regime and eventually make use of their education and training.

Both B/P and Ponchaud wrote of this, emphasizing different details, and apparently used the same informant, Dr. Oum Nal.137

During the last months of 1975 and early 1976 the authorities in the Battambang area gathered up many professionals and university students, took them to a special village, fed them well, and asked for their cooperation and comments on the revolution. Some of them, showing a complete lack of understanding of Cambodia’s wartime

and postwar problems, launched into strong criticism of the government for the lack of proper medicine (apparently forgetting that their own Lon Noi government had been unable to provide proper medicine for most people), and for the closure of schools and universities. They wanted the institutions of higher learning reopened, unconcerned that for a year or two the country might need everyone in productive work.

A group of about twenty who made the strongest criticisms were tied up and taken away, but not killed, as their comrades expected, for over a month later they reappeared from their term of very harsh imprisonment.138

The rest were taken to a rather severe reeducation prison in Battambang; and in April 1976 over forty of them were taken out, given DK black clothes and scarves, and transported to the village of Poy Samrong/Saman,139 where Ponchaud ends his story. B/P, though, continue with Dr. Oum Nal, reporting that Samrong was a "model village composed of attractive houses built on stilts," where people ate in communal dining halls and "were allowed three or four bowls of rice a day and sometimes enjoyed fish as well." The purpose of this special village was never made clear, for the informant soon afterward fled to Thailand; but it would appear that the authorities were still trying to implement plans to integrate former professionals into their system after a period of exposure to ordinary peasant life, or even privileged peasant life as in Samrong. Such plans were carried furthest in Battambang, but we now know that by mid-1977 they had been given up.140

Of the four dambans (nos. 1, 3, 4, 5) in Battambang province, the general opinion among refugees was that no. 3 was ‘good’ and the rest ‘bad,’ although even in this assessment there are important nuances.

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Damban 5 was probably the worst. It is the northernmost and least developed, and included primitive districts like Banteay Chhmar, described above.141

Much of the work there was in development of new rice fields and irrigation systems, which always seems to have been among the most strenuous tasks.

One family of several young women whom I had known in Phnom Penh complained that in a village near Tuk Chor they had never had sufficient food, had been forced to pull plows in place of draught animals, and were often beaten by female DK cadres. An interesting detail of their experience was that one day one of them was walking along the main road when she was stopped and scolded by a cadre for being out on the road in her pitiful thin condition. “What if Angka should come along and see you like this?” he said. She concluded from this that higher authorities did not always know of conditions at

village level, which, as we shall see, is supported by evidence from other places.142

Three other informants gave information about conditions a bit farther north in the district of Phnom Srok. One of them also belonged to a family I had known before in Phnom Penh. According to him, from 1975 to mid-1978 the food rations were not bad, but from June 1978 until the arrival of the Vietnamese there was near starvation, even though rice production was still normal. This can only mean that rice was being stocked preparatory to the war, which was expected already in mid-1978. In his opinion there were not many executions in 1975-78, except for high officials; and he would have been sensitive to this subject since his own brother was among those killed. He remembered the arrival of Southwestern cadres in 1977, but didn't feel that it meant a significant change in the life of the new people.143

Meng, an ex-army captain and graduate engineer, arrived in Phnom Srok in the autumn of 1975 with the second deportation. He was taken to a forest area 20 km from the road where the new people were to clear the land and build their own houses. He estimated the total population of the area as in the tens of thousands of new people with local base peasants as cadre. The district (srok) chief, however, was not a local man. Meng said that for the first 6 months (until about May 1976) there was enough food, but that 30% of the people died of malaria. In 1977-78, however, the rice crops were bad and were also taken away, as we have already seen. This led, he says,

to starvation, with only one can of rice daily per 20 people, and even cannibalism.

As for executions, he says that all former civil servants and students above junior high school level were killed, although “all” cannot be entirely accurate since he survived.144

A different type of story was told by a young man who in 1975 was about to finish high school and obtain his baccalaureat. He spent the entire DK period working on irrigation and dam construction sites in Damban 5, and in his opinion the new works operated successfully, permitting year-round cultivation. “As soon as one crop was harvested another was planted without regard to the season.” Before the dams and canals were completed, however, rice rations were insufficient, but those working near the water could catch and eat plenty of fish and forage for wild tubers. Thus hunger, even without rice, was not a problem, and in 1977-78, when the rice crops were being taken away, people who could fish still had enough to eat.145

One more brief comment from Damban 5 concerns DK use of technicians. A professional radio repair man told me that he regularly worked in the fields, but whenever a radio needed repair the cadres sent for him to do the work. His past was known, since he had always lived in that locality, but never having been either an official or in the military, he had nothing to fear on that score. Only the cadres had radios, and the only ones he ever worked on were receivers. All other radios which had belonged to the pre-1975 populace were

collected and kept in a central warehouse, from which they were taken away again by the populace after January 1979.146

Dambans 1 and 4 are separated by the main road between Battambang and the Pursat border; and since most of my informants had been in the region of Maung, near the line separating the two dambans, and describe similar conditions, I shall treat the two together.

A first general observation made by an old friend, an intellectual with considerable rural experience, was that there was more danger in that area from hunger and illness than from executions. This might seem surprising in a place which had always been a good rice area, but he contrasted the enormous rice plains, in which nothing else grew, with the more irregular topography of the Southwest, where he knew people had lived better, and where smaller fields were interspersed with fruit trees, coconut palms, or places where one could forage for wild vegetables.147

One of the worst stories, however, is from the interior of Damban 1, an area where large numbers of new people were sent to carve out new villages. Major Yem, whose experience in Phnom Penh on April 17 has been noted, said that in his district the 10,700 new people who arrived in 1975 had declined by 1977 to about 3,000, mainly from hunger and illness. Shortly before the arrival of the Southwestern cadres in that year, conditions began to improve, perhaps because of the lower population pressure on the food supply, and the improvement continued under the Southwestern

administration. Executions cannot have been systematic, for Yem says his background as university graduate, teacher, and Lon Nol officer was known, yet he never found himself in danger.

Also from the eastern part of Damban 1 was the story I noted above of 11 out of 12 Phnom Penh men who were executed for corruption after having been appointed chiefs (protean) of new villages.148 The only other details to record here are that many of the DK cadres at khum level were former monks, and that in the opinion of my informant the top-level authorities of the Northwest, such as Khek Ben in Damban 4 and Vanh of Damban 1, were planning to revolt shortly before the takeover of the Northwest by the Southwest. This is an opinion shared by many of the refugees, and apparently by the central DK authorities as well, and will be discussed further below.

From the more central parts of Dambans 1 and 4, one of the first reports was that of Sak Sau published in the Bangkok Post.149 He arrived in June 1975 with 200 families from Kompong Speu, and fled to Thailand in August. In the meantime he found that regulations were stricter than he had known in Damban 33, but there was no night work. Normal village working hours, 6-noon, 1-5, were followed. Instead people had to attend evening political meetings. Starvation was not a problem, since it was easy to catch fish and eels, even if rice was short; but there was much illness, especially diarrhea. One of the things that seems to have irritated him was that the village authorities were “foolish persons who did not know how to read or write.”

A former army captain who arrived in Maung in the second deportation found himself assigned to the fishing detail because the local DK chief took a liking to him. In every village or cooperative within walking distance of water there was a group of people assigned to catch fish for distribution to the community. All reports, including the captain's, agree that fishing was a prize task, for the fishermen could eat what they wished and often take extra fish to their families.150 Near Maung the catches were very good, but they were not equitably distributed. Rice distribution was also bad, even though the crops were good. In the captain's opinion, Maung was a very bad place to live, and the worst time was in late 1976 and early 1977 just before the arrival of the Southwest cadres, and when the general food situation was particularly bad. Executions throughout this time were selective, and relatively few. In 1978 there was a noticeable improvement in rations, but after mid-year there occurred the mass killings of people evacuated from the Eastern Zone after the revolt of So Phim.151 For the first time large numbers of people were killed openly in the fields; and most of the stories of mass executions probably date from that year.152

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Another informant from the Maung area, near Phnom Thippadey, was a woman, Neang Y, whom I had known in Phnom Penh before the war. She was in Khao I Dang with her three adolescent children, other

relatives, and neighbors, all of whom had left Phnom Penh and spent the DK years together. When they started out in 1975 there were also the wife of another old acquaintance, a brigadier general presumably killed soon after April 17, her son and daughter, and Neang Y's husband, a captain, who was executed in Maung in 1977. The other woman died of illness, also in 1977, and her son was executed because his father had been a general.

In spite of these unpleasant experiences, Neang Y was able to state that from 1975 to about June 1977 life in Maung, or at least in her district, had not been too bad, in fact nearly as good as in the Sangkum or Lon Nol years.

There was even enough medicine; and what would seem to have been unusual tolerance was shown toward her friend's daughter, a beautiful, spoiled girl, who flatly refused to go out and work in the fields. She had already received a couple of warnings, and it looked as though she would be executed if she maintained her attitude, but then she discovered that married women were not sent to the fields, but put to work within the village. She thereupon looked about and found herself a husband among the evacuees.

As an aside, and to illustrate how rumors, such as those concerning forced marriages, may get started, it is worth remarking that I had heard of this girl's marriage before meeting the family in KID. As related to me, though, she had been forced to marry a DK cadre who had abused her and left her with a child. In fact, her marriage was entirely of her own will and to a man of her own class, although it has

turned out unhappily and she now lives alone in Phnom Penh with her child.

Neang Y attributed the relatively favorable situation she observed to the fact that many of the top cadres in the Northwest, including Damban 4, were former teachers who had joined the revolution before 1970 and who were more sympathetic to urbanites and intellectuals. She, and also people from the northern part of Damban 4, mention in particular Khek Ben, of damban headquarters, who often toured around the villages with his wife and a theatrical group, keeping an eye on local conditions and providing a bit of entertainment. At a public meeting in Maung in 1977 shortly before he was arrested, he told the base people that they should not abuse the city evacuees or seek revenge for old wrongs. If the new people did not know how to work, the villagers should help them learn, rather than punish them for their ignorance.

The same attitude was taken by Ta Vanh, the “chief” of Damban 1.153

He had been a teacher at the Kompong Kantuot teacher training school, and a communist agent within Phnom Penh, until 1975. When he discovered that some of the base people in Damban 1 were abusing the evacuees, he moved them out of their houses into the fields and placed them on the same level as the new people. He tended to pick former teachers and students for office and administrative work, and gave other responsibilities to new people.

Neang Y herself was made a me-kong, leader of a small work group; and she said that anyone with a proper attitude (koulcomhor) was safe under Vanh's administration.

Unfortunately for the new people, both Khek Ben and Vanh disappeared in 1977, the former in April and the latter in June, along with their 'groups,' other fellow cadres who shared in their policies.154 Khek Ben, according to Neang Y, was replaced by "Mit Tuy," a former monk, another unorthodox cadre who had been publicly complaining of DK behavior since April 1975. He lasted only a month and then was also arrested.155

After that the Southwestern cadres took over, all the new people were removed from the privileged positions they had occupied, and from then on living conditions deteriorated and there were more executions.

A similar experience was related by a girl from Kompong Sambuor in another part of Damban 4 near the town of Battambang, where she lived with a brother and sister, both ex-teachers. Because several of the original top cadres in the Northwest were former teachers, they helped her brother, and their life was not bad; but when the southwesterners arrived in 1977 they executed both her brother and sister (whom they probably considered part of Khek Ben's and Ta Vanh's 'group'). She herself escaped, she believes, because she was away working with a mobile brigade at the time. From 1977 living conditions deteriorated in her area.156

Perhaps the worst part of Damban 4 was downriver from the town of Battambang. A large family whom I knew very well, and all of whom survived, said that their many cousins, aunts, uncles, etc., who lived downriver had perished, mainly of hunger and illness, although they were peasants and should not have had trouble either due to class background or inability to do the work required. In the opinion of the survivors, DK mismanagement had simply been so serious that not even peasants could survive. This is of course not the whole story, since the informants, half peasant-half urban, had survived very well, even though most of them by 1975 had long since ceased doing field work.

One possible reason for the disappearance of local peasant families living right along the river, and which my informants believed to have been true, was that those peasants were put to work as specialized jute cultivators for the factory in Battambang but then never given sufficient food. Before 1975 they had cultivated their own food and raised jute, which can be very arduous work, to whatever extent they wished, as an extra cash crop. When put to work full time on jute and dependent on an external rice source which constantly diminished, they could not survive.

An informant from the edge of that area, the village of Samrong Knong about 7 miles from the town of Battambang on the right bank of the river, was a former sergeant who arrived in the second deportation in January 1976.

The population was then about half new and half local peasants, but the latter were also treated as ‘new’ because they had never fought with or supported the revolutionaries, something which was probably also true of the jute peasants mentioned above (this was for them an unfortunate consequence of Battambang’s peculiar wartime situation alluded to above).157

Samrong Knong’s famous temple, which included a 15th or 16th century stone prasat, was used as a prison; and former soldiers, teachers, and businessmen were regularly killed there. Hunger was also prevalent, and in the sergeant’s kong (work group) of about 700, only half were left by the end of 1977.158

Another illustration of how the DK division of the population went contrary to normal communist principles is the testimony of 6 carpenters from Battambang who had spent 1975-79 in various parts of the province.

Although they had been genuine proletarians and were not the object of any special persecution, they were outside the privileged base peasantry. They had found the work discipline petty and absurd, even if not intolerable for workers like themselves, and they had been turned forever against any form of socialism.159

One more person who arrived in that area with the second exodus in January 1976 was the teacher whose experiences in Saang-Koh Thom have been recorded above.160 He and many other new people were sent 10-15 miles down the left bank of the river to Prek Krauch,

near the jute area, but were put to work building their own villages and clearing new rice fields.

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Perhaps the plan was for them to supply the jute growers with rice. In those new villages there was at first adequate food, and people cooked and ate in 10-family groups (krom). After April 1976 there was full communal house-keeping at the village (phum) level of well over 100 people, and from then on food quantity and quality steadily deteriorated. Hard rice meals were replaced by rice soup, at first thick and adequate, then thin, and by August very thin to the point where real hunger set in and they could only survive by catching field crabs, frogs, etc. during their noontime rest hour. K.K. remained there only until September 1976 when he fled to Damban 3. Up to the time he fled there had been very little killing, and he only knew of two cases, both women killed by a cadre named Hay who was himself then arrested for murder. The first woman had complained about food, and Hay accused the second, who was pregnant, of having stolen bananas.

In the evenings the new people were subjected to very strong reeducation, at least every three days, sometimes every evening; and it was always on the same two themes: (1) build up the country, and (2) defend the country.

They were told that the country had been destroyed during the war and now all must join hands in the task of reconstruction. As for defense, they were told they must prevent the enemy, unspecified, from entering. There was also instruction on work discipline and lifestyle. They must be careful not to break or lose tools, and should not complain about anything. They must eat what was given, forget about vain habits such as manufactured cigarettes and alcohol, and if they collapsed and died while working hard, that was laudable.

One more story from Damban 4 is that of a young woman from the large surviving family I mentioned above. Their home had been about 5 miles downriver from the center of Battambang and they were evacuated just a few miles away to a peasant village area. Tay, as I shall call her, worked in the fields until August 1975, and, being healthy, she volunteered for the mobile brigade because food rations were better even if the work was more strenuous. In the meantime her husband and brother were assigned to a fishing detail from which they could bring back food to the rest of the family; and soon she was able to join them and to spend the next two years fishing in the Tonle Sap or bringing the catches back to the villages. By that time the Southwest cadres had taken over and they appointed her me-kong (work group leader), in which position she worked until the autumn of 1978.

Tay's general comments on the DK system are quite interesting. The village-level Northwestern cadres whom she knew up to 1977 were from the Samlaut area, and except when someone like Khek Ben or

Ta Vanh was around they were very rough, and in particular enforced a low diet on the new people. When the Southwesterners arrived, they said the old cadres had been too cruel, and in fact the food situation in Tay's area improved, but there were more executions. It was under the Southwest cadres that Tay was appointed me-kong, because of her education (high school), which enabled her to keep records and write reports better than the peasant cadres. Tay said she never met a cadre who was a bad person; and she denied that they objected in principle to everyone with education. In fact they needed some educated people at all levels of their administration, and only objected to those who were arrogant or tried to show off.161 If one worked hard and was sincere, it was possible to survive. Most of the killings of ordinary people, as opposed to former high officials, demoted cadres or the easterners in 1978, were the settling of old scores, either individual or class-based, or because the victims had refused to work and cooperate with the regime.

This is of course not absolutely true. One of Tay's friends described the only killing she had ever witnessed as the result of a quarrel over a watch. A cadre had taken the watch of an evacuee, who then complained to a higher-level official. His watch was returned, but shortly afterward he was murdered by colleagues of the original watch thief. Similar stories are reported from many other places, especially in the northwest.162

In general, though, Tay's remarks about DK discipline and self-discipline fit a picture inferable from the stories of other thoughtful observers among the evacuees. In particular, the rules on

sexual morality, which often resulted in executions, were as rigid for the cadres as for the new people, perhaps more so. Tay, who is very attractive, remarked that no cadre ever looked her full in the face while talking to her, and flirtation for DK personnel was entirely out of the question. If a cadre wanted to favor a woman, he could make life easier, or if she was capable, appoint her me-kong, about which Tay obviously knew something, but that was all.

This position of me-kong could carry considerable privilege, which helps illustrate the very hierarchized nature of the DK administration.163

Tay kept the written records for her unit, was given a bicycle for travel between villages, and extra rations, and she was aware of some administrative secrets, such as rice trucked away for stocking and undistributed sugar and salt in warehouses. This was not true of all me-kong, though, for Neang Y said her task was simply to keep track of a work group which she led back and forth between work site and village. She was not well educated, however, and could not have handled all the tasks given to Tay.

The jute whose increased production efforts may have ruined many of the peasants below Battambang was destined for a jute bag factory, also in Damban 4 just 5 miles downriver from Battambang in Daun Teav. Since I knew many people in that area and had visited the factory in 1970, I took some interest in what had happened to it and had begun asking refugees from Battambang about its operations as soon as I started work in KID. The answers turned out to be as

instructive for a study of the STV as for the state of industry under the DK regime.

Many refugees simply said that of course the jute factory, like all industry, had been dismantled and the workers killed. Then, on one of my trips to the Sakeo camp, I met a man who between 1975 and 1979 had been a DK driver for the higher Northwest zonal officials, and had travelled all over the zone. He claimed that the jute factory had operated normally until 1979; but another refugee, who even in Sakeo had adopted a strong anti-DK stance, told me privately that the ex-chauffeur was obviously lying, that no factories had been maintained by the communists.

Some weeks later, in the Lumpini refugee transit center in Bangkok, I got into a chance conversation with a woman of the Phnom Penh elite whose sister had once been a student of mine. When I asked what kind of work she had done, she replied that she had worked in the Battambang jute factory. “But when, before or after April 1975?” “Both,” it turned out.

Before 1975 she had been an accountant in the factory administration, and was kept on by the new authorities until September 1975 when she fled to Damban 3. She did not know how long thereafter the factory had continued to operate, but had heard that sometime in 1976 the old workers had been replaced by peasants and sent out to do fieldwork. Finally Sgt. Chileng, whose village was just a couple of miles away, knew that the jute factory had continued to function until the end of the DK period.164

In the accounts from Damban 4 above, we have seen two cases of flight from what may have been the worst part of that area to Damban 3; and these incidents provide a convenient starting point for the discussion of the latter region.

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K.K., the former teacher, said that his September 1976 decision to get away from Damban 4 was because rations had been declining in quantity to such an extent that he was afraid of starvation, and because he had heard that a purge of former teachers and students was about to begin. He lied to his local cadres that his father was ill in another village upriver, received permission to make a visit, then took a sampan along the river to Wat Kor on the other side of Battambang in Damban 3.165 There he was registered without any questions asked and settled down in what may have been one of the most comfortable spots for new people in the entire country. There was plenty of food in Wat Kor, and the communal eating which so irritated people did not start there until August 1977. When K.K. arrived, each family was drawing its own rice supplies at the temple-warehouse and preparing its own food.

It was on one of the occasions when his wife had gone to pick up rice that they had their only narrow escape. At the distribution point,

there was someone from their old village who recognized her and reported to their former authorities. The latter requested their forcible return from Wat Kor, but the cadres there “took pity” on them and let them stay. They remained there until 1979, K.K. assigned to the duck egg detail, never suffered from hunger, and until the confusion of 1979 the only unjustified violence they witnessed were a few killings related to the 1978 rebellion in the East.

The only execution of a new person remembered by K.K. was of a young man who was an incorrigible thief and who was finally shot after ignoring several warnings. Even the arrival of the Southwest cadres seems to have made no difference. As for the purge he had feared in Damban 4, he later heard of the deaths of two teachers whom he had known there.

Wat Kor was a very “loose” place, and K.K. attributed this to the circumstance that some important people lived there. The mother of Nuon Chea, Chairman of the National Assembly’s Standing Committee, was a resident; and rumor had it, although K.K. was not able to confirm this, that Penn Nouth (Prime Minister, April 1975-76) also lived there part of the time.

The jute factory accountant also fled because she believed herself in danger, and she also reached Wat Kor. In her case the chief cadre in Daun Teav, whom she had known before he joined the revolutionary forces in 1971, warned her that she should get away, and to help her get out of the village placed her on the factory fishing detail for over a month. Eventually, on one of the fishing trips she got away to Wat

Kor, which was her native village. According to her, Wat Kor was a “model district” where foreign visitors were entertained. She was put to work in a kitchen preparing food for such people and observed Chinese, Yugoslavs, and Bulgarians among the foreigners who came to Wat Kor, but who, she claims, never went to Damban 4.

Although Wat Kor was a “model” place, details of life there are not unusual when placed against other accounts of life in Damban 3, and the only common factor which seems to explain the difference of that region from others is that it had always been a rich rice area and therefore had adequate food. New people who ate enough would have performed their work better, complained less, and infringed fewer rules to bring down the wrath of the cadres upon themselves. This cannot have been the whole explanation, though, for almost all the accounts of Damban 3 emphasize that the policy of the authorities in itself seems to have been more benign than elsewhere; and among the refugees in Khao I Dang there was general agreement that Damban 3 had been a ‘good’ place where no one starved and few were killed.

Along with this is a strange lack of information about the damban-level cadres, who should have gotten some credit for its superior living conditions.

There had been ‘good’ times and places in Dambans 1 and 4 too, and most people related them to the personalities of top cadres whose identities they knew, such as Khek Ben and Vanh. No one I met from Damban 3 knew the names of any region-level officials; and few had

been impressed by special qualities in the lower cadres whom they did know. Moreover, in the Tuol Sleng list of arrested high officials to which I have several times referred, and in which men from the Northwest figure prominently, there is only one name from Damban 3, “Vom Chet (Cu),” listed as Deputy Secretary of the region and arrested on August 12, 1977, which would have coincided with the Southwestern occupation of the area. Although his removal must be seen as part of the general purge, the circumstance that Damban 3 was otherwise left intact might at first suggest that it was considered to have been more correct in its ideology and policies, and that its cadres were not assimilated to the Khek Ben-Ta Vanh-Khe Kim Huot group of former intellectuals who were thought to have let the party down. On the other hand, the Tuol Sleng list ends in April 1978, Nhim Ros, Secretary of the Northwest, was not purged until June, and if Damban 3 had been his favored region its cadres might simply have been strong enough to resist outside pressure until the latter date. This second hypothesis is strengthened by the more recent identification of the damban secretary, Phok Sary (Tum), arrested in June 1978.166

The potential desirability of Damban 3 was realized by some evacuees from the very beginning. One of my former students, working in Phnom Penh in 1975 and forced to go toward the southeast at first, set off on a long trek back around Phnom Penh and through Kompong Thom, Siemreap and around the lake in order to reach Mongkolborei, where he assumed rice would be plentiful. He reached it in June 1975 and was put to work on dikes and dams, which he says were not very successful, in several villages on the

road between Sisophon and the Thai border. He reported that he never saw any killing, and always had enough food to stay alive, but that he had to work hard day and night. He did hear of some executions for sexual offenses, that is, illicit flirtation, but such cases were among the DK cadres themselves.

The new people, he said, were too tired or too intimidated to indulge in flirtations. The arrival of the Southwestern cadres in 1977 did not make much difference. At first they provided slightly more food, but later on less; and although in theory the base and new people lived together, the former still had special privileges.167

By way of illustration I referred above to the case of a woman teacher who was put to work again teaching children after April 1975, and whose husband was assigned the task of gathering medicinal plants. This was in the cooperative of Takrei, district of Ampil Pram Doeum, almost due west of Battambang. When I eventually met her village chief, an old revolutionary, in Sakeo, he said that policy toward new people had depended very much on the village chief (mephum). If he was vindictive it was easy to have them killed; if he reported favorably no one was executed unless higher authorities had some special reason. This mephum of Takrei had heard of the same execution orders reported from Kampot. That is, in April indiscriminate killing was allowed, but in October an order came forbidding it.168

When the Southwesterners came to Takrei there was no significant change in food or execution policy, and the ‘good’ mephum was not

arrested; but the teacher and her husband were taken away from their easy tasks and put to work making fertilizer from manure.

Not far away, in Kauk Khmum, a former teacher and evangelical Christian, whose family had been Christians for a couple of generations, reported that even in his native area where his identity and background were well known, he never had to fear for his life. Kauk Khmum, according to him, was a good area; and in particular his own village. chief, a former Buddhist achar, was such a good man that even after the end of the DK period he was able to remain there without fear of retribution from the population.169

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As one proceeded farther into the interior of Damban 3, however, toward the Thai border and away from the old cultivated rice area, conditions became somewhat more severe. One young man agreed that Damban 3 was ‘good,’ and that there was no killing, but felt there hadn’t been enough food; 170 while an old peasant who had been brought from Battambang to the Poipet area to clear and plant new land said that they were fed well, but overworked and subject to “fierce” discipline.171

Sneng, which the Far Eastern Economic Review publicized as the home of a mass murderer, deserves attention as a ‘medium’ area in

Damban 3, neither ‘good’ nor very bad. Right after the DK victory a number of former Lon Nol military were killed there, something remembered vividly by those whose friends or relatives were among the dead.172

Til Vin, the man whose name was mistakenly displayed to the world as responsible for the massacre, said that Sneng had been an active revolutionary district since before the war, and that in 1974, during a government raid, he and many other old cadres had been forced to retreat to Chamlong Kuoy, deep in the western part of the province near the Thai border. They only returned in 1977, at which time Til Vin became a khum, or cooperative, official with authority over about 3,000 people. He claims that policy toward recalcitrants or those who made mistakes was not immediate execution, but continuous kosang, criticism and reeducation, which fits well with the description of Damban 3 as a whole. The only executions in which he admits responsibility, and which he still seems to consider justified, were two cases of couples who had infringed the rules against illicit sexual intercourse. Touch Khieu agreed; and a woman from Sneng whom I met by chance at Nong Chan when she came for rice supplies, and who knew nothing of the accusations which led to the FEER flap, reported that Sneng had been a relatively good place to live and the authorities relied on constant kosang more than violence.173

Also of interest is that when the Southwest cadres came in 1977, they were on the lookout for Northwest cadres who had performed badly, but Til Vin was one of the local communists who was

maintained. In fact, depending on the precise date of his return to Sneng, he may have been installed in his position of authority in connection with the Southwestern takeover, which in the opinion of Touch Khieu resulted in a slight improvement in the living conditions of the new people.

The worst story from Damban 3 in my collection came from a man who before 1975 had taught Pali and Khmer at a religious school in Phnom Sampeou, north of Sneng, and who remained in a nearby village during the DK period. As one might expect, he was particularly concerned with the treatment of monks, which will be discussed later; and the abolition of religion had obviously soured him on the DK regime. The population of his district was about 80% base peasants and until 1977 all the village-level cadres were local men, with khum and higher-level officials DK personnel from elsewhere. Some of the local cadres were “very bad and murderous” and were arrested, demoted to ordinary peasant status, or executed in the takeover in that year by Southwest cadres. The latter did not kill many ordinary people, but living conditions didn’t change much either. Early in 1975, as in other parts of the Northwest, many former military men were killed, and later onsome intellectuals disappeared one by one. In total he estimates that between 1975 and 1979 there were about 100 executions in his cooperative and many other deaths from hunger.174

In concluding the description of Damban 3 it is interesting to cast a glance back at B/P’s two accounts from that region, both, not surprisingly, very bad. The first concerns a new village (evacuee

population on new land) in Sala Krau, northeast of Pailin in the far west of Battambang province.175

Because the rice ration, already by August 1975, was near famine level and several former soldiers had been killed, the village chief, a 'new' man and former soldier himself, decided to kill the DK guards and lead the entire population to Thailand. As we have seen, the new villages usually suffered the worst conditions, sometimes due partly to the incompetence of their own leaders, 176 and in that part of the province a report about poor food rations is easy enough to believe. It does seem incredible, though, on the basis of stories from other new villages, that as much as 30% of the population was already incapacitated in August 1975. Another interesting detail is that there were only four cadre guards for 1,800 new people, which should indicate that the authorities did not consider the situation there to be explosive and were not expecting trouble. At the very least, Sala Krau was far from being a "microcosm of new Democratic Cambodia," and certainly not of Damban 3.177

B/P's second story concerns a family who moved from Pailin to Ampil Pram Doeum, from which the original villagers had been evacuated, but where the new arrivals had to build their own houses rather than use those of the old village. Conditions were horrible and brutal, and finally the young man who was head of the family had to flee to escape almost certain execution.178 Each of the details but one is credible as a type of incident which happened in Cambodia, and this story, unlike some other parts of B/P, cannot be dismissed as a falsification. However, it is from the area of Takrei, Bovil, Kauk

Khmum, where other refugees describe conditions as rather good, and is thus exceptional, rather than - as B/P implied - typical. The only detail which is suspect is the evacuation of the original villagers of Ampil Pram Doeum, apparently, judging from other accounts, a base area. Barron and Paul may again, as they did with Damban 25, have put Quinn's words into refugees' mouths.179

We are going to move on to the southern part of the Northwest Zone, Dambans 2, 6, and 7 in the province of Pursat, from which the reports are almost universally very bad, and where even relatively benign conditions would have been nearly as rare as starvation around Wat Kor. Indeed Pursat, which B/P did not touch at all, would have been the microcosm for which they were searching, and no one today would be able to come up with very many countervailing stories or explanations.

As in the case of Dambans 25 and 33, the most useful starting point for the examination of Pursat is the book of Pin Yathay who, at the end of his second deportation, which he joined voluntarily, found himself in September 1975 in the deep forests of Damban 6 just beyond the town of Leach.

Into this uncleared forest the communists sent thousands of new people to settle, build their own houses, and prepare new fields. Their rations were lower than anything Yathay had experienced up to that time, only one-half can (125 gm.) of rice per day for young and old alike; but they were allowed to keep small individual vegetable

gardens, which were often unproductive “because we were not used to garten work and the ground was unsuitable.”

Those with gold, cash, jewels, or extra clothing, like Yathay’s family, could augment their rations through trade with nearby base villages, which as in the south were relatively rich, but from which, contrary to the south, the new people were segregated; and because of this “no one” in Yathay’s family had yet "died of hunger."180

Yathay’s parents and parents-in-law were exempt from work because of their age and remained at home caring for the children. Even his wife was exempt because her young son was ill; and one young unmarried sister was able, like a girl mentioned above, to avoid distant field work and remain in the village simply by stating that she was married, but widowed. As Yathay pertinently remarked, “the family … had not yet become the target … of the Khmer Rouge,” and his rather large group of 18 persons was able to stay together.181

The work, especially for city people, was of course very hard, and combined with the low food rations, which diminished to 1 can for 6, and then 8, people, led to many deaths from hunger and illness. By December 1975 he estimated that one-third of the 5,000 people in his immediate area had died

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There were also executions, which for the first time in his experience became a clear and present danger. He mentions several prominent persons who were presumably or certainly killed, notes that people began to come across abandoned corpses in the woods, and tells us how his own cousin and brother-in-law were executed for violating regulations or making remarks considered subversive. Still the numbers seem to have been relatively low, and he admits that "these macabre discoveries [of dead bodies] were rather uncommon."182

Of interest in several respects is that the bodies of those dead of hunger and illness were treated differently from those executed. The former, quite numerous, were placed together in mass graves by teams of grave diggers who, along with the family of the dead, could take a day off from their normal work, while the latter, much fewer, were abandoned individually in the forest.183 In comparison with the general conditions he describes, Yathay's own circumstances were relatively good. His wealth assured him and his family an adequate food supply and his own physical strength enabled him to keep up with the work which was assigned. In general those who worked well were on good terms with the cadres, and if work was well done there were no problems. Yathay, in fact, was praised for his industriousness, eventually made chief of a small work group where he, almost like a cadre himself, fussed that "unfortunately there were some people who complained all the time"; and when he injured himself slightly at work, he was given three days' rest to recover.184

He even found that the DK cadres could be decent people. When one son died soon after their arrival in Pursat, his wife emotionally demanded that the body be cremated rather than buried, and although that was against regulations the village chief gave them permission for a cremation and came himself to offer condolences. The same man showed his good qualities on other occasions, and seems to have been a former achar, a temple lay official.185

At the very end of December 1975 Yathay was involved in another move. An official from a different district came to ask for volunteers, saying that conditions would be good and they would have plenty to eat. A thousand of the remaining people volunteered and within a few days were taken to villages near the town of Pursat in Damban 2. On the way they passed prosperous villages where the people assured them that life was tolerable and they ate well; and the first night of their arrival, in Chamkar Trasak, they were treated to a communal meal of good fish soup and plenty of rice. The good food continued during the following days, and it appeared that promises were going to be kept.

Moreover, Yathay met a cousin of his wife who lived in a large house in the nearby village of Don Ey; and she was able to arrange, against regulations, for Yathay and his wife to move in with her. His parents and parents-in-law, although in another village, were still close enough for visits.186 Don Ey was in majority a base peasant village, which was an advantage, and in fact the copious food continued until the end of February 1976. There were also medical facilities within easy reach of all the surrounding villages.187

Then, it seems, everything broke down. Yathay was sent to the lake on a fishing detail, and there the ration was rice soup, instead of hard rice, together with whatever fish they could eat clandestinely. When he returned to the village, the good food had been replaced by rice soup, everyone was sick and dying, and all but three members of his family - himself, his wife, and a child - had died. In all 80% of the population of Don Ey died, although he does not tell us when this had occurred. Finally, in November 1976, he met a cadre who, recognizing him as an engineer of the Phnom Penh elite, denounced him to the authorities; and he decided that he must try to escape.188

Yathay's narrative breaks down at the same time. For the first 200 pages, up to the time of his arrival in Don Ey, it is a sober, rather well-organized account, such as one would expect from a trained technician; and he is manifestly trying to give an objective report on the new regime, even when the facts are clearly contrary to his preconceptions. The remaining 200-odd pages do not show the same careful organization.

Bits and pieces of information, sometimes contradictory, are thrown together with little regard for the time sequence; and it is no doubt this last half of the book which caused some people to cast doubt on Yathay's reliability.189 The last half, then, is not nearly so valuable as the first, but the account of life in Pursat still fits the stories of other refugees from those regions, to which we shall now turn.

Only one person I met at KID had been in Damban 6, Yathay's first stop and the most primitive part of Pursat. Miss Kim, a former student in my class at Kompong Thom in 1960-61, had spent the entire DK period in Damban 6 along with several of our acquaintances, and she had even known Yathay there before he moved. She related that food production gradually improved, but from 1977 on there was an increase in systematic executions.190

One man who had spent the entire time in Damban 2, the area of Yathay's second residence, reported a similar situation. During the first months after April 1975, treatment of 'new people' was reasonably good, but then food decreased to the point of starvation. Most deaths were from hunger and illness rather than execution, and my informant said he was semi-permanently on the burial detail, where he knew of much cannibalism.19 At the end of 1977 the Southwest cadres came to take over the administration. Many of the old cadres were arrested or killed, but the new people did not suffer from the change. Then in 1978 cadres from the Western Zone came and proved to be the most murderous of all, treating cadres, base peasants, and new people with equal brutality.

Most of the refugees from Pursat seem to have been in Damban 7 bordering the lake. Mam, a Svay Rieng native who was studying law in Phnom Penh, did not wish to go home where he was known in 1975, and with five friends went by boat to Kompong Chhnang and then to Bakan, north of Pursat town, arriving there in September. On arrival they were granted two days' rest and given all at once a four-month rice supply at the rate of 250 gm per day. Only high

officials and military were targets of execution, not teachers or students; and Mam said that his life was not bad throughout the DK period. He was fed well, and did not even lose weight. He was, however, an exception, for he had grown up in a peasant village, looked like a peasant, and had no difficulty in doing the work. His village of about 470 was in majority base peasants, who took care of him, but of 131 'new' men sent there he claims to be the sole survivor. The rest could not do the work, did not have the sympathy of the peasants, and gradually died off.

Although base and new people lived together in theory, the former had special privileges. In addition to the communal meals they could also eat extra food at home, which they shared with Mam.

Besides the hardships imposed on the new people, rice production in terms of yield per hectare declined by about half. As in other parts of the Northwest, a new administration from the Southwest arrived in 1977, but conditions didn't change very much; and as in Damban 2, the Western Zone took over in 1978 and killed all the old cadres.192 Another man, however, said that executions in Damban 7 greatly increased after 1977, perhaps reflecting a less favorable personal situation than Mam's integration with base peasants.193

Three people from different villages in the Kandieng-Sya district just downriver from Pursat town had similar stories. They all remembered that the damban chief was a well-known former teacher, Khe Kim Huot, who in 1977 was arrested with his whole group of subordinates and accused of treason.194 The new damban chief was Tri, a former

primary school teacher from Koh Thom (Damban 25), and under his administration conditions improved for the new people, at least in Sya. A man from Kandieng considered that life there had always been bad, with many disappearances and much death from starvation which he attributed to a badly managed economy.

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All three witnesses agreed that the worst times were in 1978 after the Western cadres had replaced the Southwestern.

Like Mam, above, they reported that the old and new people lived together, but the former had special cooking and eating privileges. As for total deaths, they estimated that one cooperative declined from 7,000 people in 1975 to 2-3,000 in 1979, with about 15% executed, while another decreased from 8,500 in 1976 to 3,200 in 1979, with 25-30% killed.195 One of my informants, a young woman, told of spending some time in the district hospital along with cadre patients who boasted of having killed large numbers of new people, and enjoyed doing it because the latter were “exploiters.”

Finally, there are two relatively good reports from Pursat, both from Damban 7. A KID refugee told me in 1980 that in the village of Kbal Choeu Pok food had always been adequate because cooperative leaders were able to manage their economy well, and if necessary

they faked their statistics in order to keep back enough food to feed their people. This was particularly true during 1975-78, when, he said, “there was no excessive killing at all.”

After the Western cadres took over in the latter year, they still maintained a good economy, but killing increased noticeably, in particular the mass executions of Eastern Zone people brought over at that time. A similar account was offered in 1982 when I met Dr. B.K. in one of the camps along the Thai-Cambodian border. He had spent the entire DK period in Kanchchor, Kandieng District, and he reported that his identity as a physician was known and that the cooperative chief had protected intellectuals by registering them as workers. Only those who “were lazy” or who were thieves were in danger of execution.

If we look back at the Northwest as a whole now, we should be struck by the extreme variation among the seven dambans, both with respect to general living conditions and extermination of those whom Angka considered their class enemies. Indeed there is no place one can call a microcosm of the whole, even less so if the Southwest is also taken into consideration. Before going on to the other zones, it will be useful to try to draw a few general conclusions about the areas we have surveyed. In comparison to the Northwest, the Southwest appears much more uniform, with policies more clearly stated for the new people and more consistently followed. At its best, in Damban 25 in 1975, it resembled Damban 3 of Battambang, and even at its worst no one reported the horrors of Pursat. Indeed, both low-level Southwest cadres who were part of

their region's move into the Northwest in 1977 and other refugees from the Southwest who went north in early 1979 agree that they had never seen such misery at home as they did in Pursat and parts of Battambang.

In retrospect the invasion of the Northwest and removal of large numbers of its cadres by their neighbors from the south appears as a major purge by the Pol Pot group directed against rival factions within the party. The urban refugees generally believe that the Northwest cadres were planning to revolt against the center because of their objection to the brutal conditions being imposed on the people, and one of their reasons for this belief is that several of the top men in the Northwest were themselves former urban intellectuals (that is, teachers). On the other hand, some former Southwest cadres believe the move was because people were being oppressed in the Northwest.

There is probably some truth in both those beliefs, but there is not much we can know about such matters with any certainty. A few objective circumstances, however, are worth noting. In contrast to the Northwest, former intellectuals of the Sihanouk period seem to have been very few among the top officials of the Southwest. Most of the latter were old Communist fighters, unknown to the new people, from the anti-French Issarak days of the 1940s and '50s.

By the time they occupied the Northwest they had clearly been doing a better job of management than their colleagues in the latter zone; but whether this was due to superior ability or to geographic and

demographic circumstances is something we cannot determine here.

It is significant, however, that in some parts of the Northwest their arrival meant better conditions for the new people, in some places worse conditions, and in some places no change at all; and the pattern seems to be as follows:

(1) in those places where the intellectual cadres of the Northwest had favored, or given soft jobs to, former urbanites the Southwesterners removed the cadres, put the favored new people out to hard physical labor, and even killed some of them;

(2) wherever there had been massive brutality against new people and severe hunger, the old cadres were removed and the conditions of the new people improved, although sometimes only temporarily if it proved impossible to increase food production - a major problem when, as from 1978, much food was being stockpiled;196 (3) where things had been going smoothly, as in most of Damban 3, there was very little change, either among lower-ranking cadres or in the life of the evacuees.

As we found in our examination of the Southwest, the impressions of the Northwest by responsible cadres generally agree with the descriptions offered by urban evacuees. The cadres concerned are of course originally southwesterners who went north after the purge of 1977, and since most of the former Northwest cadres have been

liquidated we may never know how they would have explained the situation.

One who survived to be interviewed accepted blame for policies which were good for party and base people, but not for the ‘new,’ and which led to many deaths after 1975. “We ruined everything,” he said, "so we have no right to complain."197 Unfortunately his interviewer did not record the place in which he had worked, for if his assessment accords with refugee stories from some dambans, it is in contradiction to evidence from other places where the new people considered that policies in 1975-77 were good for them too.

One difference between the Northwest and Southwest was the relatively greater prosperity of most of the former at all levels before 1975; and a poor peasant in Battambang might have been equivalent to a rich peasant in Kampot or Takeo.

Because of this and the nominal Republican government control which was exercised until 1975, no cooperatives could be established until after April 1975. One high-level cadre who went there in 1978 described the Northwest as “very strange.” He was astonished to find that the people were very much afraid of DK cadres and on meeting them would shake with terror, “as though the cadres were feudal lords.” He claims that he tried to end the terror and told the population that in the revolutionary period, feudal inequalities were over. On specific regions, he noted that living conditions in Damban 4 were very bad, but that in Sadau of Damban 1, where there was a cotton factory, life was acceptable.198

In general these Southwest cadres blame the defects of the Northwest on treason among the original cadres, and on their policy of trying to curry favor with the center by sending out too much rice, instead of holding back enough for consumption. A DK man who went there in 1977 said that when the Southwest cadres went north after the purge of 1977 they found the situation very bad, with people starving, and no faith in the government.199

In parts of the Northwest, and noticeable particularly in Pursat, there was a second major purge and reorganization in 1978. The urban evacuees say it was led by Western Zone personnel and that it was more brutal than the purges of the previous year, claiming victims indiscriminately among cadres, base peasants, and new people. Remarks by a former cadre accord well with that evidence, and also shed new light on it. In the reorganization of 1978 the triple classification of the people was changed and “anybody could be put in a leadership position”; the ‘18 March people’ [inhabitants of pre-1975 revolutionary areas] were no longer safe and were being killed too; all of which suggests some resentment toward the new policy on the part of base people and party cadres.200

Since the Western Zone appears to have played a major role in that purge of the Northwest, and because of its geographic proximity to the other two zones which have been examined, I shall now give attention to the West.

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## The Western Zone

The survey will be brief because very few refugees from that zone crossed my path, but those who did agreed that it was generally a bad place.

Part of its poor conditions were inevitable, due to objective geographical circumstances. It had always been relatively ‘bad,’ with poor soil and poor peasants. Originally part of the revolutionary Southwest, the “desolate” West had only been turned into a separate zone after 1975;201 and it was placed under the administration of Chou Chet, one of the old Pracheachon group of communists who had started fighting against the French in the 1940s. With hindsight, given what has happened to that group since 1975, one might wish to suggest that the purpose of creating the Western Zone was to put Chou Chet in a place so difficult that he could not avoid failure, thereby providing his enemies later on with a realistic excuse to eliminate him.

One young man who had worked during the Lon Nol years as an interpreter and assistant for western journalists said that in Kompong Chhnang, Damban 31, hunger had been a constant problem and that executions of urban people were common. On the

other hand a survivor from Damban 32, to the west in Kompong Speu province, said laconically that "if one worked one ate."202

Another, an engineer, was at Phnom Baset in Damban 15 for six months after the end of the war before being transferred to the Northwest. The new people in his area cleared land and planted rice; and their basic ration was one can of rice a day plus salt. At the time he left, starvation had not yet occurred. His father, who had been in construction work, was taken to another district and put to work at his old skill, building houses. Eventually, however, a village chief took a dislike to him, accused him of having been an army colonel, and had him killed.203

One special case was a former ship pilot in the port of Kompong Som, who was kept at his job by the new authorities for over a year after April 1975. Then, when it was considered that he had trained sufficient new men, he was sent out to do field labor, and he did not have any special atrocities to report. In early 1979 he was taken along in the DK retreat for 5 months as far as Battambang, and in contrast to most people on that trek, said that he had enough to eat along the way.204

As in every zone and region except the Southwest, there was a report of at least one place which was considered very good throughout the DK years. For the West that was Ponhea Lu, near the river north of Phnom Penh and near Oudong in Damban 15. According to a teacher and Ministry of Education official, that district was exceptional in that there was adequate food and no executions. He believed that the

cadres had always lived near towns and were therefore more civilized and kinder. He had heard that farther west, especially in Kompong Speu, conditions were very bad.205

His opinion of the original Damban 15 cadres may have been shared, invidiously, by higher-echelon DK authorities. On a visit to Damnak Smach, near Oudong, in August 1981 the village chief, Keo, an old revolutionary partisan who had been village chief both before 1975 and during the first part of the DK period, told us that in 1977 some of the damban and district-level officials had been removed on the grounds that they had lived too close to the city and could not be trusted. Keo's own experience at the time also provides an illustration of DK social policy. He too was removed from his official position and demoted to ordinary peasant because it had been discovered that one of his sisters had married a Cambodian resident in southern Vietnam.

Thereafter, although not imprisoned, he was under suspicion and had to write and rewrite his autobiography as often as three times a month, a task for which special forms were provided.206 Nearby in Peam Lovek, Oudong, Thiounn Chhum, three of whose brothers were revolutionary activists but who himself was evacuated to work as a peasant, reported hard work and suffering from hunger and illness at first, but steady gradual improvement and apparently no attempt to search out and kill intellectuals.207 If it should be alleged that his relatively positive account of life in DK is suspect because of his personal position, we must note that it fits well with other accounts from the same area.

The purge of the top West Zone cadres occurred in early 1978, just before the West Zone move into the Northwest, and it might have been because Chou Chet opposed the coming inter-zonal struggle.208 In any case, it is clear that as a member of the old Pracheachon group he was a marked man.

The impressions of former DK cadres in the Western Zone are less in agreement with refugee evidence than we found in the Southwest and Northwest, but this may be due to the extreme scarcity of reports from either source. In general the cadres seem to have considered the West, like the Southwest, as an ideologically correct zone with few contradictions, but the only specific areal report among the Heder interviews comes from Damban 15, which even for the urban evacuees was a relatively, sometimes absolutely, good place.

One former ordinary base person from Damban 15 reported that, as elsewhere, the first efforts at cooperative organization had been in 1973, at the village level, and after 1975 khum-level coops of several villages were organized. Since in his village there were many landless peasants and few rich, coop organization went smoothly, and, at least before 1975, only persuasion was used to urge the recalcitrant to comply. From 1975 to 1977 Damban 15 was under a man whom the informant considered corrupt and abusive and who had many people executed. After he was purged in 1977, food rations increased from barely sufficient to more than sufficient, and there was an increase in the amount of time for rest.209

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## The North-Central Zones

This area will be treated as a unit although it was never a single administrative entity. Before the purge in early 1977 of the cadres of the original North Zone and Siemreap Special Region 106, it included Dambans 41, 42, 43 and probably 103, grouped as the North Zone, plus the Siemreap Special Region. Afterward Damban 106 was renumbered 44, and the entire area divided into North and Central Zones with the boundary running between Dambans 43 and 44.210

Koy Thuon, a former high school teacher who had joined the revolutionary maquis in the 1960s and had risen to the leadership of the Northern Zone as well as chief of state commerce at the national level, was arrested with all his colleagues and associates and replaced as strongman of the entire area and Secretary of the Central Zone by Ta Pok/Pauk, his former deputy who had also been commander of the zone military forces.

In addition to Koy Thuon, there were several other former teachers in the zone cadres or associated with Thuon in the State Commerce Ministry, and, according to some refugees, they were associates of Hu Nim and Tiv Ol of the Information Ministry who were arrested

slightly later. Refugees who had been acquainted with these people from before the war. believed that they wanted to follow a more gradualist policy than that implemented after 1975 and that their opposition to Phnom Penh on that aspect of policy was the reason for their arrest.

It is impossible at present to know whether that is true, or merely wishful thinking by evacuee intellectuals from the city; but after Thuon was replaced in 1977 by Pok's group plus other cadres sent from the Southwest, conditions seem to have generally deteriorated for the new people, and the North/Central Zone has a reputation among them as a bad place.

All refugees from among the urban evacuees agree, either from experience or hearsay, that Damban 41, not far from Phnom Penh to the northeast, was the worst of all, and that within that region the district of Prey Chhor would take the prize for brutality.

A former businessman who spent the entire DK period in Prey Chhor reported that under the original northern cadres conditions were tolerable, and, interestingly if incorrectly, he regarded them as of the "white" (sa) group which in other reports usually means rebels entirely outside the DK apparatus.211

In any case, under the first administration, killing was restricted to Republican soldiers and high officials, but after the Southwest cadres took over in 1977 they killed many new people as well as the ousted cadres. A precise estimate was impossible to get from this man,

because he insisted that in Prey Chhor alone there had been a half million executions, about six times the total population of that entire district. As to food, it was bad, but did not reach starvation level, and in the rubber plantations was abundant. He considered that the agriculture of the region deteriorated because the cadres were arbitrary, did not pay attention to the experience of the local peasantry, and therefore often chose seed which did not suit the soil.212

The relatively good treatment in the very beginning is confirmed by Ponchaud's only witness from the area, who from April to June 1975 lived in a base peasant village in Svay Teap, in either Damban 41 or 42. Not only did he comment on the decent treatment accorded the new people, but he is one of the few urban folk, either in the literature or in my own experience, to show any sympathy for the plight of the villagers during the war.213

Another witness to conditions in Prey Chhor in 1975, a university graduate in business administration, returned to join his parents there after the end of the war. Since it was his family's native place, he could not hide his identity, and one of the regional cadres, a former schoolmate, wanted to have him arrested. Because of that he fled farther north in November of the same year. In his report he made no particular mention of atrocities, and when he returned to Prey Chhor in 1979 he found his entire family - parents, brothers, and sisters - still alive.214

One of my own former students spent 1975-79 in another part of Damban 41, Taingkok (Choeung Prei), and according to him organization was ‘loose’ in 1975-77. Koy Thuon, he thought, wanted to open markets and run regular schools; and executions during 1975-77 were confined to Lon Nol military, police and high officials, plus individual revenge murders which he considered to have been most numerous of all. After the change of regime in 1977 the number of official executions increased, and was even extended to the widows and families of military victims. It was because of the abrupt change in 1977 after the relatively benign situation during the previous two years that he distrusted the apparent liberality of the Salvation Front in 1979 and decided to emigrate.215

Another survivor of Damban 41, whose small, weak physique and obviously urban appearance provide their interesting commentary, confirmed that conditions had become very bad only after 1977; and as a result only eight out of one hundred new families survived in his village.216

From the eastern extremity of Damban 42, former Kratie province, an evangelical Christian pastor reported that in 1975-76 there had been little killing, but many deaths from malaria. Execution was the fate only of those positively identified as Lon Nol military. In 1977 the pattern changed twice.

First the old base people, for unexplained reasons, began to kill new people indiscriminately. Then the Southwest cadres arrived, arrested

the old cadres whom they accused of being KGB agents or pro-Vietnamese, and conditions improved slightly for the evacuees.

Inevitably there were some good places too. One family whom I did not meet, but whose story was told to me by a daughter resident outside the country since 1973, was sent to a village near Baray, in Damban 41. They were not only urban, but were very light-skinned, which is supposed to have been dangerous, and included two graduate engineers, one of whom did not try to hide his qualifications. Yet this entire group of half a dozen people, including the rather elderly parents, survived. They reported that some people disappeared, and were presumed executed, but that there had always been plenty of food. Moreover, the father was particularly valued because he was clever at all sorts of practical work, such as repairing sewing machines.

Ironically, the only tragedy suffered by this family was the fate of one son who returned to Cambodia from France in 1976 and was killed for trying to escape from the place to which he was assigned.217

Somewhat farther north, in Staung, Damban 43 or 44, another of my former students returned to his native village. He spent only two nights there, for his relatives advised him that because he spoke and dressed differently from ordinary villagers, having been away for a long time in the city, his presence would cause difficulties for them and he would be in danger himself. As he remarked, there was much hatred of Phnom Penh people in that area; and he proceeded on

through Siemreap to Mongkolborei in Damban 3, where we have already met him.218

The fierce hatred which he reported in Staung is also found in the account of one of Ponchaud's sources who said a cadre in Staung announced that they would search out and kill all officers, soldiers, officials, students, and engineers.219

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In contrast, the village of Somphong, district of Santuk in Damban 43, was very good, according to a Phnom Penh businessman. There was always adequate food and no executions. All the surrounding villages were very bad, however, especially after 1976, and particular targets of execution were former civil servants and chams.220

Such extreme differences among contiguous units at that low level seem to have resulted from the personalities and attitudes of the village cadres rather than from factional divergence on policy. In two different parts of Sandan, farther north but still in Damban 43, refugees remembered their village cadres as especially severe. One of these men said that the strictest authorities in Sandan were former monks who had joined the revolutionary forces several years earlier. In 1975-76 only soldiers were executed, but many others died of illness, since although rice production was good, it was stocked or

taken away and not distributed in adequate quantities. When the Southwest cadres came in 1977, they killed many of the old cadres and base people, but the food situation improved. Those doing hard work got plenty of food; and the rest were given rice soup, “but fairly good rice soup.” The situation of the new people further improved in 1978 when they were advanced to Candidate status over the suspect Eastern Zone people who were exiled there.221

Around the villages of Phum Koh and Phum Kaul in Sandan, where most of the native population belonged to the Kuy ethnic minority, the latter were considered base people and formed the village-level cadres. According to a former navy captain they were very strict and brutal toward the 30,000 city people sent there after 1975. The captain himself survived by claiming that he was a practitioner of traditional herbal medicine, about which he really had some knowledge, and he was put to work gathering plants and treating the ill. In the same district was a well-known Phnom Penh doctor, My Samedi, who, according to the captain, was allowed to practice traditional medicine which he also knew, and survived to become chief of health services in Phnom Penh today.222 Another former Phnom Penh doctor, Tan Meng Huot, who knew only modern medicine, was not allowed to practice but was assigned to agricultural labor and eventually executed in 1978.

The captain had little sympathy for Dr. Tan who, in the very beginning of the evacuation, perhaps to curry favor, had denounced him as a former officer, as a result of which the captain was arrested and severely beaten to make him confess. But since he consistently

denied his military background, he was released and allowed to return to work.223

According to the captain, few of the city evacuees survived. He claimed that in Phum Kaul the 8,000 new people were all dead by 1977 and that of the 30,000 in the district only about 200 have survived. Furthermore, of about 20,000 East Zone exiles brought over in 1978, all but 1,000 perished.

Although the Kuys were the favored base peasants, when one of their villages revolted, the entire population of 700 people was killed.

The captain's statistics, however, are belied by another survivor from the same area whom I had known in 1962 and met again in Phnom Penh in August 1981. He considered conditions in Sandan generally "adequate," meaning no starvation and minimal killing. The cadres, he confirmed, were local people, and their control over the area had been secured long before 1975. His positive assessment is of course relative, as is nearly everything told about DK; and he emphasized that during 1975-79 they had no knowledge of any other area, felt they were being mistreated, and assumed that life in other places must have been better. Only after liberation in 1979 did they realize they had been relatively fortunate.224

Moving northward we come to the former province of Siemreap, first organized under the DK regime as a special region, Damban 106, then in 1977 renumbered as Damban 44 and merged with the rest of the North. I met few refugees who had spent the DK years there, but

they all agreed that it had been a very bad place for new people, with very large numbers of executions, although they could offer no special reasons as to why this should have been so.

Among the events which involved much killing were the purge of the Damban 106 cadres and, following closely upon it, a large-scale popular revolt, perhaps the most serious such event in the entire DK period. In the purge, 14 of the top cadres appear in the Tuol Sleng list as having been arrested between February 26 and March 6, 1977, which with respect to numbers concentrated in a short time period makes it the most violent purge reflected in that list.

Then, as reported by a refugee whose written account we have noted above, in April there was a great revolt in the district of Chikreng in the southern part of the province. The old Region 106 cadres, he says, had been disarmed because they were suspected of disloyalty but not yet removed.

In fact they had been told the disarmament was part of a replacement of old weapons by new. But while they were still in place and unarmed, the populace rose up and began killing them, apparently in the belief that Sihanouk was about to arrive and that the ‘Pol Pot’ regime was finished.225

C.S. says that the revolt lasted four days and nights and hundreds of cadres, and others who had not participated in the revolt, were massacred.

Then Eastern Zone troops were sent in and in a few days suppressed the revolt at a cost of 8-10,000 deaths. Finally, other troops from the Southwest arrived, accused the Eastern troops of treason and arrested them, together with all cadres who had aided them, but caused no further harm to the local inhabitants.226 In the circumstances related by C.S., his own survival seems little short of miraculous. He had apparently not participated in the revolt, yet was not threatened by the rebels. This is inferable from the fact that East Zone troops stayed at his house and he prepared food for them. Then, in spite of his cooperation with the Easterners, he was left alone in the purge carried out by the Southwest. I shall return to this again below.

Another man, whom I shall call S.I., a native of Siemreap who had worked in the lycee there, spent the time from May 1975 to November 1976 in another village of the Chikreng district, fleeing to a different part of Siemreap shortly before the first signs of the coming purge appeared. In Phum Leav, a rice village, the population in 1975 was about 800 - 600 base peasants and 200 new people. According to S.I., there were very few executions during his residence, but food supply was very bad and starvation occurred among the new people. The base peasants, as we have seen elsewhere, had better rations of their own.

By November 1976 S.I. decided he was in danger and fled, going beyond Siemreap town to Puok, where he was able to get assigned to a nearby village. In January 1978 he was arrested and put in a

reeducation camp for 6 months with about 500 others accused of having been Lon Nol militia.

They worked on a dam construction site, and during the six months, there were about 100 executions but very few deaths from other causes. When released, he was assigned to another nearby village where he worked until the Vietnamese invasion.227

There are a number of unsatisfactory details in both of the above stories, but they could not be checked further since I never met C.S., and after one meeting with S.I. was unable to contact him again for more questioning.

There is also more mystery surrounding events in Siemreap than in the accounts of most other regions. On February 25, 1976 a serious explosion occurred near the center of town. The DK government accused the U.S. of responsibility for aerial bombing and announced that an F-111, flying at . high altitude, had dropped 3 bombs in the morning, and then at 2 o'clock in the afternoon two other planes of the same type dropped more bombs.228

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The U.S. of course denied the charge; and in January 1979 Asiaweek, in a strange and inconsistent article, claimed that "well-placed

sources" had just recently leaked the true story to their correspondent, who appeared nevertheless to have already heard it "some time ago," perhaps even in 1977. It was in fact an air raid, but allegedly carried out by Vietnamese, and it occurred just a few days after "a group of Khmer Rouge officers" had met to plan a rebellion.229

The fact of an aerial bombardment was confirmed by Siemreap residents when I visited the town in August 1981, and with details which tend to confirm the DK government claim. A man working at Roluos, some 20 km to the southeast, told me he had heard an explosion in the morning, but had not previously noticed whether or not a plane had approached. Then in the afternoon he saw two planes over the town and heard two explosions. Further confirmation was provided by a refugee from the same area. He remembered a morning and an afternoon raid, "at about 2 o'clock," and he said that a former Lon Nol pilot working with him identified the planes as F-111 or F-105, or perhaps both.230

Another piquant detail which cannot yet be inserted into the puzzle is that in Sihanouk's Chroniques de guerre et d'espoir there are photographs showing him on a visit to Siemreap "in February," even though his trip is nowhere mentioned in the book. He was probably not there on the 25th, though, for Radio Phnom Penh announced his reception for foreign ambassadors on that day.231

By the end of 1976 Phnom Penh indeed suspected the entire North of dissidence, perhaps in particular Region 106, Siemreap, whose

cadres, all arrested so suddenly, may have been plotting something. Then there is the strange case of the Chikreng revolt against disarmed cadres (set up for it by their chiefs?) on the basis of a rumor that Sihanouk was about to return and take over authority; and this led to intervention by Eastern troops who were then punished for their loyalty to the regime by the Southwest.

The rumor about Sihanouk sounds very much like disinformation from the outside, and in connection with this and the conflicting stories about the mysterious bombing, certain details in the backgrounds of C.S. and S.I. are worth noting.

C.S. claimed to have worked from 1973 to 1975 for the Resettlement and Development Fund of the American aid program. As for S.I., he at one time had excellent relations with the CPK, and during 1970-75 maintained contact at various times with them, with the Lon Nol government, and with the American Embassy.

He claims that he knew what would happen when the communists took Phnom Penh (thus better informed than some of their own personnel), and therefore left the city a couple of days earlier, crossing the river into the Eastern Zone, which means passing through the enemy lines at a time when the only people allowed exit would have needed a special pass attesting that they were revolutionary agents within the city. Then in Chikreng he at one point planned with two friends, former Republican colonels, to escape to Thailand, but renounced the idea, considering it too dangerous, while the other two set off never to be heard from again.

When I repeated this story to an official American Cambodia-watcher, he asked if I had recorded the names of the two colonels. I had, and he was obviously excited to hear them, and very disappointed to learn that they had disappeared. I found it intriguing that of all the colonels in the Republican army he should have had a special interest in two who had been at that place, at that time, and in the company of S.I.

However suggestive such hints may be, they do not permit more than speculation. Some of the plots which the DK government accused their former colleagues of hatching must, however, have had a basis in reality; and events in Siemreap during 1976 and 1977 indicate that something of that nature may have been going on there.232

Possibly an exception in the generally negative picture of Siemreap was conditions in Roluos, a village 20 km southeast of the provincial center near some important Angkor-period temples. The entire staff of over 400 persons, including families, of the Angkor conservation office were evacuated there. Over 300 of them are still alive, and one to whom I spoke said the widespread killing in Siemreap occurred, in his opinion, after the change of administration in 1977.233

Beyond Siemreap, Damban 103 is a wild, forested area as strange and insalubrious for city people as Damban 6 in Pursat. Our last report from the North is that of a Cham Moslem school teacher who spent the DK years there. As in Sandan, most of the local population and the village cadres were Kuys and very strict, but the base people,

who constituted over two-thirds of the population, and the new people shared the same life. Hunger was not a serious problem, since there was usually plenty of rice, but even when that was lacking, the numerous game of that region was regularly hunted and the meat distributed to all. Executions were also less of a threat than in many other places, with about 20 occurring in the village of 400 in which the informant lived. Illness, in particular malaria, however, was a major hazard and accounted for very high death tolls.

Being a Moslem Cham-was of no consequence in that region, and even though his background as a schoolteacher was also known to the authorities, it was not held against him because he always tried to work hard.234

It is more difficult to make a general assessment of the Northern Zone than of most of the rest. It seems to have been different from most other bad areas in that there were more deaths from execution than from hunger.

This comes through from the direct observers I have cited, and was also the impression of a former engineer who in early 1979 walked from Damban 5 through Kralanh to Siemreap town and was told along the way that there had been little starvation but much killing.235 This situation might have been due, first, to the very strong hatred of the local people for Phnom Penh, which is noted in most of the reports; and that hatred could have been nourished by the heavy bombing which had covered large areas of the zone during 1970-75. The informants from Damban 103, from Sandan and

Santuk, and from Baray all commented on the quantity of bomb craters still visible after 1975. A second cause of many deaths, particularly around Siemreap, was the purge of the original regional cadres and the very serious revolt in Chikreng soon afterward.

Rivalry among the original cadres may also have made the purges more violent than in the Northwest. Already during the war it was known among CPK personnel that no love was lost between Koy Thuon, the Northern Zone secretary, and his deputy, Pok, of peasant background and a native of the Central Zone (northern Kompong Cham province). Koy Thuon, like Khek Ben in the Northwest, would probably have opposed generalized violence by the old people against the new, something which Pok might well have favored or at least ignored.

Unlike the Northwest, it seems that an excessive export of rice to the center in order to curry favor was not a problem, since one DK man familiar with rice movement asserted that the North had sent virtually nothing at all.236

Among the movements of important cadres in the takeover of the North by the Center and the Southwest, it is instructive to note the following. Kang Chap, secretary of Damban 35 in 1975, became deputy secretary of Kompong Thom (Damban 43) in 1976, and then in 1977, after the purge in Siemreap, he went there as secretary of the new Damban 44. In August 1978 Kang Chap himself was arrested as a traitor and replaced by Soeung, whose earlier career had been in a Southwest military unit during the war and in the

Western Zone committee afterward. Another Southwesterner, Tul, had gone from Damban 31 to Damban 42 sometime after the war, but in 1977 was arrested and replaced as damban secretary by Chhoeun, a brother-in-law of Pok; and the source of this information said that in Damban 42, only Pok's relatives and associates were still around in 1977-78.237

Thus, although the North, like the Northwest, was in many places infiltrated by Southwestern cadres during 1977, they were all subordinate to Ta Pok, the new zone secretary who had his own power base and loyal cadres in Dambans 41 and 42. Pok, like Ta Mok, the 'godfather' of the Southwest, was of non-intellectual, rural, Issarak background, the type of leader favored by the Pol Pot clique. Had the regime not been overthrown in 1979, one might have expected a further power struggle between the Mok and Pok factions.

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## The Kratie Special Region, Damban 505

This 'good' area may be dealt with very briefly before going on to the last major zone, the East. Refugees who spent the DK years in Kratie were not easy to find in Khao I Dang or the Thai border camps, but long before I met any I was intrigued by the hearsay reports among

other refugees that Kratie had been a good area in which both starvation and executions had been minimal.238

The best of the hearsay reports was that of a teacher in KID whose brother, a man still working in Phnom Penh, had been in that damban near the Vietnamese border. In his district there had been relatively few evacuees, base and new people shared the same life, food was adequate, and he rated conditions as good. At the very beginning Lon Nol officers had been executed, but thereafter there were very few killings and even many high officials survived. He also noted that it was easy to conceal personal valuables, and that there had been less DK factional strife than in other zones.

Another witness from Damban 505 was an engineer whom I met in KID. In February 1976 he was sent to a village just 3 km from Kratie town after spending several months in the East Zone, where he had already gotten used to hard work.239 At first he found the work very hard, with long hours and what he considered short rations - 50 cans of rice per month, which works out to about 416 grams per day, luxurious when compared to many other areas. Later on he was moved to Chhlong Loeu, a forested area in the eastern part of the damban, to work on the construction of a new village.

Most of the people there were new, and most were former officials. The work hours were long, from 4 am to 11 pm, with rest breaks at 11-12 and 5-6, and an hour for cleaning up the village at midday from 12-1. Discipline was strict, but food was adequate, there were no

executions, and apparently little illness, since he says everyone survived.

He said many of the top cadres were former teachers, including the man whom he believed to have been damban chief, Yi Kon.240 They disappeared in 1977 and 1978 in connection, he believes, with factional disputes affecting the Eastern Zone nearby.

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## The Eastern Zone

This zone and the Southwest were the two most important areas of prewar CPK organization, yet they developed in different ways, leading to serious contradictions, armed conflict of a scale which deserves to be called civil war, Vietnamese intervention on one side, and the replacement of Pol Pot's Democratic Kampuchea by the People's Republic of Kampuchea.

The contradictions are apparent from all sources of information. As noted above, Henri Becker was not told by the Northern cadres of East Zone involvement in the occupation of Phnom Penh, although Yathay's story showed that they must have been there, and refugee DK cadres have now confirmed that they were.241 Yathay heard several times about differences between the East and the Southwest,

but believed the main bone of contention to be the question of Sihanouk's participation in the government, which the East was supposed to have favored.242

Although his account is garbled, Quinn also got wind of the conflict,which he described as between the Rumdoh, "liberation" group, who were just fighting for the restoration of Sihanouk, and the more hardline 'Khmer Rouge' communists.243 Such confusion was made all the easier because in the early years of the war there probably were groups of guerillas whose only goal was the defeat of Lon Nol and the return of Sihanouk and who had no affiliation with any faction of the communists.

While differences over the role of Sihanouk may have played some part in the dispute, two other issue: were much more important - the manner in which communism was to be implemented in Cambodia and the relationship with Vietnam. As part of these important differences, the history of the party as written in the East was different from the version of the Pol Pot faction, accepted as orthodox in the Southwest,244 and before 1975 there was probably even some disagreement about the composition of the top leadership of the Cambodian Communist Party. The differences were reflected in the appearance of the Eastern soldiers.

As Pin Yathay remarked, the Easterners were known to wear fatigue uniforms rather than peasant black; and in the eyes of a refugee Eastern cadre "the Eastern Region [Zone] troops were more liberal … won't wear black like the Southwest troops but mixed uniforms.245

The sharp difference between Eastern Zone troops and other revolutionary forces was visible to other urbanites too in the first days after the evacuation. A former engineer, describing passage across the Tonle Sap north of Phnom Penh, contrasts the cold, unfriendly behavior of the Special Zone troops with the decent, helpful treatment accorded the new arrivals by the Easterners who, “carrying babies for the mothers … helped to carry the invalid ashore … even tried to steady me by holding onto my arms loaded with bundles … were helpful and answered questions to where we could camp.” They "were good commie soldiers."246

Discussion of contradictions within the CPK will be continued in more detail later, but some hint of what was involved is useful as a background to the refugee evidence about life in the East during 1975-79.

My first source of information about conditions in the East was a former high school teacher, 'Ngo," captured by the communists in 1973 in one of their early offensives in Kompong Cham province and who thus saw something of their policies during and after the war. In his opinion the CPK policies in their liberated zones in the East were very popular with peasants up to 1973 (which may account for the fact that Quinn, who perceived the difference in Svay Rieng, seems to have found information from eastern districts unusable for his analysis).247 Food was plentiful, prices were low, there was no brutality; and people often wrote to relatives and friends in Phnom Penh to leave the city and move back to their villages. In 1973

conditions became noticeably harsher, both with respect to discipline and demands on the peasants to furnish food and manpower for the revolutionary armed forces.248

When ‘Ngo’ was first captured he was taken to a place near Peam Chikang in a vegetable- and fruit-producing area near the river. After the war it would be included in the infamous Damban 41, but in 1973 cooperatives had not yet been organized, markets were still allowed, and people were not suffering. He was first imprisoned for 6 months because as a teacher he was a Lon Nol government official. Prison was a labor camp where work was hard, but there was no torture. Although he considered the food inadequate, he found on his release that he had gained weight. After serving his sentence he was allowed to stay at home with his wife, was not forced to work, and had plenty to eat. At that time a number of other men captured with him fled the communist area eastward into Vietnam, from Saigon returned to Phnom Penh, and ‘Ngo’ met them again when they were evacuated in 1975.

After their escape he feared arrest again and fled across the river to the Koh Sautin district of Damban 22, where he spent most of the rest of the DK period. Koh Sautin was a very rich food area which continued to produce well throughout the following years, particularly corn and fish, and the population there never suffered from hunger. In ‘Ngo’s’ opinion, people were given adequate food throughout nearly the entire Eastern Zone and virtually no one died of starvation. As for executions under the original cadres, before 1978, there was much killing in 1975 of Lon Nol military and high officials, sometimes

including women and children, and of rich farmers along the river, but afterward very little. (On another occasion, however, he said that only officers were killed, not civil servants or farmers. Even the best informants sometimes contradict themselves, and it is then often impossible to determine, not only the 'truth,' but what they believe the truth to be.)

From another part of Damban 22, Khsach Kandal, another former teacher and Education Ministry official reported that there was no killing by the Eastern cadres, not even in the first evacuation of 1975. There was also adequate food, and he said all sorts of former high officials who were sent there still survive.249

A written report on the testimony of a person whom I did not meet also touches very briefly on Damban 22, for it was devoted mainly to the 1979-80 period. The author was also a teacher, 26 years old in 1970, and who from then until 1975 had a meteoric political and administrative career.

Between 1970 and 1972 he was private secretary at different times for Son Ngoc Thanh and Long Boret (Khmer Republic Prime Ministers), and during 1974-75 chief of the "Office of Confidential Affairs" of the Foreign Ministry.

In between, in 1972 and 1973 he had spent three months studying at a politico-military institution in Taiwan ("Ecole de guerre politique supérieure") and nearly a year in Australia studying English. Not surprisingly, when he was deported to Khsach Kandal in 1975 the

authorities suspected he had worked for the CIA and imprisoned him (date not clearly specified). He wrote little about conditions in prison, which I assume to mean they were not too bad; and his release came in October 1977 when some of the villagers offered to guarantee his behavior.250

Some evacuees to the East give specific evidence of efforts to gradually introduce city dwellers to hard peasant labor, apparently not a concern in other zones. One such report was from a man who had gone to Chhlong, Damban 21, and who said that the introductory period had been for a week or so, followed by two days' rest.251

The same thing was noted by the engineer, H.N., whose experiences in Kratie have been described above. He began his DK career in a prison camp in O Reang Au, Kompong Cham, in Damban 22. There some executions of Republican officers occurred, but food was adequate, and prisoners, all urban new people, were gradually trained to do hard work. At first they were allowed to set their own pace to get used to the work and eventually brought to the condition of real peasants. They then had one month of political education, and in July 1975, 67 of them were sent to the base village of Tuol Sralau, where they were mixed directly in with the old peasants, under a district (srok) chief who was a "Khmer-Hanoi," one of the old pre-1954 communists who had gone to Vietnam after 1954 and returned in the 1970-75 period.

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At first they felt that conditions in Tuol Sralau were worse than in the prison of O Reang Au. None of the base people would even speak to them.

But they tried to work hard, and after a couple of months the peasants began to talk to them; and when they had been there for three months they were considered equal to the base people, although not yet quite in the Candidate or middle category. In the end he found the work pace at Tuol Sralau very easy.

In February 1976 he was transferred to Kratie, and by then was confident enough of his status to object to the transfer and request time off to search for his family, whom he believed to be in Prey Veng, Damban 24. At first the authorities considered his request favorably, but then turned it down. In 1979 he was finally able to go to Prey Veng and found the village where his family had been, but they, and all urban intellectuals there, had been killed in the anti-East purges of 1978.252

Before 1979 few refugees from the East reached the Thai border. But one who did, an army major whose story was published, said that in Damban 20, covering parts of old Kompong Cham and Prey Veng provinces, “the Khmer Rouge are less brutal than elsewhere.” Although they worked hard on canal and dam construction, he "was allowed to pick fruit, and we had rice."253

A former teacher whom I met in KID said that in his district of Damban 20 there were few new people in 1975, about 1,000 families, or 10% of the population. Depending on production, they ate rice soup during 2-6 months of the year and the rest of the time hard rice, and plenty of it. The chief of his cooperative was good, but after the 1978 revolt was demoted, and then committed suicide because he was afraid of imminent arrest.

Although execution and hunger were not major problems for the new people before 1978, malaria was present, and many died of it.254

The relatively moderate conditions in Damban 20 were also reported by B.T., whom I met in a KPNLF camp on the Thai border in August 1982.

An officer in a Khmer Republic military intelligence unit, he returned by plane from Bangkok on April 17, 1975, landing at Kompong Thom. Assuming a civilian identity, he was able to set out on a two-month search for his wife, moving from Kompong Thom to his home area in Kompong Cham, where he eventually settled down under a cooperative chief who had once been a prewar co-worker in a Phnom Penh tobacco company. He and his wife were finally reunited by chance in 1979 after they had both proceeded separately to the Thai border.

A schoolteacher at KID spent the DK years in Damban 23, former Svay Rieng province, and reported that it was a good area with little

hunger or killing until 1978, when large numbers of the population, both base people and new, were taken to the northwest and the entire administration changed.255 An interesting statistic from that damban is found in the Vietnamese publication, Kampuchea Dossier, the purpose of which was to justify Vietnamese intervention by showing the DK regime in the worst possible light. There we find the story of a new village of 272 households, or about 1,000 people, established in 1975 in Chantrea, a border district of Damban 23. Land and animals were apparently insufficient and rice production at first low, but up to February 1977 when the informant fled to Vietnam there had been only two executions, a statistic which would seem remarkably benign in the Northwest, North, or Southwest, although there had been 3-4 deaths per month, mostly children.256 Assuming the facts to have been reported accurately, the relatively bad conditions, for the East, might have been due to the formation of a new village in a difficult border area. The low food rations he reported are exceptional in comparison to other East Zone information, as are the numerous deaths of children, who in Damban 22, at least, received extra rations and special treatment.257

In Damban 24, old Prey Veng province, an agricultural engineer returned in 1975 to Baphnom, his native place. For the first 5 months he was imprisoned in a labor camp with 3-400 other men, and the food there was bad. Then he was sent back to a village cooperative where he lived with his wife, two children, and parents, although he often had to work away from home for months at a time. In that cooperative the majority of the population of about 500 were base peasants, with only about 30 new families.

Everyone ate fairly well up to 1977, although the base people had special privileges. From 1977 there were no such privileges, but the general standard was lower because of poor production; and in the 30 new families, 28 of the men died. He noted that among some of his local relatives there were base people, but they avoided him, and some really disliked him because he had become an urban intellectual. Although living conditions in general seem to have been worse than in Dambans 20 or 22, he stated that intellectuals, teachers, doctors, engineers, were not killed, but were not employed in their capacities either. As in the rest of the East, 1978 brought mass evacuation to the Northwest, but he was not taken.258

That traumatic event of 1978, which is reported by nearly all East and Northwest Zone people, involved tens of thousands, perhaps as many as 100,000 people.259 They included, first, East Zone cadres; then 'new' people of 1975; anyone believed to be Vietnamese, part Vietnamese, or pro-Vietnamese; and even many ordinary base peasants. Many, particularly the cadres and those with Vietnamese ethnicity, were killed on the spot; and many of the rest were eventually killed after they reached the Northwest. Even in the relatively bad areas there, people had not seen such brutality before; and most of the mass graves and stacks of bones probably date from that time.

According to 'Ngo,' those captured by the communists in 1973 were generally left alone, and, in a strange twist away from the STV, he and

his family were saved in 1978 because he was known as a former government official.

His mother looks Vietnamese and was thus at first in danger; but since ‘Ngo’ had been a teacher he could not have been Vietnamese, and the family was then accepted as pure Khmer.

For most of the new people in the East, the events of April-May 1978 came as a surprise - the sudden appearance of central government troops, mostly Southwesterners, who arrested and executed the old cadres and began taking people away. In ‘Ngo’s’ area there was first an announcement by So Phim, the chief of the Eastern Zone, that an attack was imminent and that Son Sen, the Phnom Penh Minister of Defense, was a traitor. There was some combat, but So Phim was soon killed, along with numerous other cadres, and the rest of the East Zone staff fled to Vietnam, from which they later emerged to become the Heng Samrin government.260 The new authorities announced to the population that the reason for the coup was the pro-Vietnamese treason committed, or about to be committed, by the East Zone communists and all the others who were gathered up for deportation. For the remaining 7-9 months of DK administration in the East, life became much harsher for all, new and original base people alike, and there were many massacres.

Before the coup and purge of 1978, the entire East had been a relatively good zone, both for base peasants and new people. It had many good agricultural districts, and the administration was in the hands of disciplined communists with long revolutionary experience.

The zonal authorities did not deprive the population by sending excess rice to Phnom Penh,261 and urban intellectuals, as such, were not usually mistreated. It is interesting that most of the informants above reported an initial period in a prison, labor camp, or reeducation center, which seems to indicate a more consistent effort than in other zones, both to weed out real enemies and to prepare the rest for life in communist villages.

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These inferences from the stories of bourgeois refugees are supported by a report from the 'other side.' Above I cited evidence from a former high school student and early revolutionary soldier.262 Following the 1975 victory Kong was transferred to the headquarters of the Phnom Penh command, and in January 1977 he was sent to the East with a communications unit of the central government forces, obviously a particularly good place to hear about what was going on.

In his words, the East Zone was quite different from the rest of the country, life was better than in any of the other zones, and the interests of the people were considered. So Phim was known to have said that the purpose of the revolution was to improve the standard of living, not to regress from rich to poor or to force people into

misery just to learn how it was to be poor (Pol Pot's policy, according to Kong).

This statement on policy differences enunciated by a semi-educated young man whose only sources of political information for over 5 years were those available in Cambodia fits precisely Stephen Heder's characterization of the basic difference in Cambodian and Vietnamese communist theory, which was emphasis on relations of production in the former and on forces of production in the latter. The Cambodian way was to destroy all class distinctions and force everyone down to equal 'communist' poor-peasant level and then rebuild society on a class-free basis, while in Vietnam the existing production facilities, including trained people, would be taken over, put under 'socialist' management and their production used for the benefit of all.

The congruence with an a priori theoretical explanation gives added weight to Kong's characterization of the East, and also shows that the poor-peasant populism which was a mainstay of Pol Pot's social revolution was viewed with some lack of enthusiasm among the East Zone leadership.263

Along with a domestic policy resembling in some respects that of Vietnamese communism, So Phim, according to Kong, had not had any troubles with the Vietnamese, and his policy had been to maintain friendship with them. In retrospect we can see that as the principal cause of his downfall and the destruction of the East by Pol Pot.

The purge in the East was qualitatively different from the earlier ones in the North and Northwest. Although all were accused of treason and of hatching plots against the central government, which in some cases may have been true, the Northwest purge, about which we have the most information, was also clearly directed against cadres whose areas had performed badly and who therefore may really have been incompetent or corrupt (one of the many aberrations of the DK system was the frequent treatment of incompetence, or even honest error, as treason).

The East, however, was with the Southwest one of the two best-run zones, with good food production and distribution and less killing than elsewhere. Incompetence could not have been the reason. Yet the purge was by far the most violent event of the entire DK period. The reason given by the DK authorities is unambiguous. It was not incompetence or mistreatment of the population, but treason, and moreover treason in favor of Vietnam, the most heinous of all treasons.

Heder's former DK cadres, who were from the Southwest, offered some interesting comments on the contradictions between the East and other zones. One of them felt that the East had always been different, more liberal, and refusing even to wear the same uniforms. Another referred to objective socio-economic conditions, noting that before the war, living standards in the Northwest and East had been relatively high, and that this had led to contradictions between them and the poorer Southwest. Although true, this does not explain the

quite different style of the Southwest takeover in those two zones. More pertinent are the revelations that the Southwest had started arresting Easterners as early as 1975, and by 1976 had started to implement a plan to sweep all Eastern cadres out of the system. The reason for this was that the East was considered to be full of traitors who had long-standing close relations with the Vietnamese and who would probably let the latter in to assume control in Cambodia. Proof of treason was in So Phim's alleged diversion of rice from Phnom Penh in 1977-78 in order to send it to Vietnam.264

The above is of course the very one-sided view of men from the rival Southwest, and some of the accusations, such as diversion of rice to Vietnam, are probably untrue; but the East nevertheless was the zone in which men of the old Cambodian Communist group, who had cooperated with the Vietnamese in the 1940s and '50s, predominated. This was also the zone to which most of the 'Khmer Hanoi,' members of the old party who had fled to Vietnam in 1954, returned during and after the war. Although the Vietnamese and Cambodian communists cooperated in the beginning of the war, contradictions between their policies and objectives soon arose and became so serious that the Vietnamese were expelled from Cambodia, armed conflict sometimes broke out, and, according to some former cadres, Vietnam by 1973 was declared by the CPK authorities, or at least by the Pol Pot faction, to be the main enemy rather than Lon Nol or the United States.265 Within that climate of opinion, the 'Khmer Hanoi' and all other members of the old party were suspect, and it is probably true that plans to exterminate them had been made by 1974-75.

Although details are not clear, this means that the East probably wished to follow a different policy toward Vietnam and may have had different policies for the construction of a Cambodian communist society. They could also claim to be older Khmer communists than Pol Pot and his faction, and might very well have viewed the latter as usurpers.

Further discussion of these matters, which I have touched on here in order to indicate the special character of the East, involves the entire subject of the history and development of Cambodian communism, which is out of place here and will be considered again in chapter 5 below.

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## Themes and Variations, Some General Conclusions

Several specific conclusions about patterns of zonal and regional differences deserve emphasis. The early hypothesis of the Northwest's special character which might account for a more brutal situation there than elsewhere has been shown correct, and generally for the reasons alleged: greater extremes of economic differentiation, less intensive communist preparation, and its role as the last pro-Lon Nol bastion outside of Phnom Penh.266 Within that

general picture of the Northwest, however, there were interesting regional differences both geographical and temporal which made it the least uniform of all the zones.

Thus in some areas urban evacuees suffered immediately from the brutality of local cadres, and life improved marginally after the purge and reorganization by the Southwest in 1977. In other places lenient communist officials had mitigated the situation of the evacuees and then everyone suffered increasingly after 1977. Every story from the Northwest must therefore be situated precisely in time and place.

The second interesting general conclusion is that the correlations between zonal or regional conditions and previously existing economic, social, or political circumstances are often unexpected. Of course, hard living in the forests of Pursat or northern Battambang would not have been surprising, and neither is it astonishing that people ate well in the rich food areas of Damban 3.

It might not, however, have been predicted that the poor, thickly populated, and very revolutionary Southwest would perform as well as our reports indicate; and it seems surprising that in the original center of Pol Pot-style policy, the miseries associated with that policy were less manifest than elsewhere.

The Southwest, this ‘microcosm’ of Pol Pot policy as it was apparently envisaged by its originators, was a relatively if frighteningly well-run place, in no way the total chamber of horrors which that policy is supposed to have represented, and which it

became in less well-organized zones, or when the Southwest was used by Phnom Penh to carry out purges elsewhere.

The general consensus of thoughtful refugee opinion is that there was never, in the Southwest, a policy to exterminate intellectuals, or professionals, or even all Lon Nol officers. Discipline, however, was extremely strict, and minor infractions could be punished with extreme severity. The most important criterion of survivability was to adopt entirely the demeanor of a poor peasant; and a former city intellectual who would not be bothered if he acted like a peasant and worked hard, might well be executed if he showed the least hint of his former class superiority.

The fact that the two best zones for living conditions were, first, the East before 1978 and, second, the Southwest, indicates the importance for good conditions of a solid, long-term revolutionary organization, with numerous experienced cadres. Conversely, in the bad areas of the Northwest, the effects of poor geographical conditions were exacerbated by an inexperienced revolutionary organization erected almost ad hoc after April 1975. One of the elements in the relative situations of new people was the attitude of the base peasants and their organization by the revolutionary authorities; and an old friend who had had experience in both the Northwest and Southwest before the war and during the DK period told me that the base peasants in the Southwest behaved much better toward evacuees than those of the Northwest, a remark congruent with Pin Yathay's experiences of 1975-77 as well.267

A third important general point is that somewhere between one-half and two-thirds of the country, before 1977, could be considered relatively good areas in which conditions of life were no worse, and deaths in excess of normal peacetime conditions no more numerous, than could reasonably be expected in the total national emergency created by the war of 1970-75.

Conversely, of course, other parts of the country were a nightmare in the same period. The very bad areas, the microcosm sought by Barron and Paul, were to be found in parts of the Northwest and North-Center, but not in uniform, predictable circumstances. In some places, especially in 1975, there were numerous executions due to localized vengeance; in others there were massive death tolls from hunger and illness when new people were forced into insalubrious forests to clear new land. In still other circumstances there were large numbers of executions, especially in 1977, when zonal and regional administrations were purged by Phnom Penh. The worst such purge was in 1978 and involved mainly the East Zone administration and population.

Everywhere but in Dambans 20, 21, and 22 of the East, the year 1977 was a time of purges in which cadres from the Southwest played a leading role; and nearly everywhere except in areas where people had already starved, 1977 marks the end of a time when life in general was tolerable.268

The deterioration in conditions of life in 1977 cannot be too strongly emphasized. Only in Damban 3 and certain parts of the East do

people say that previously tolerable conditions were little changed; and in the East, 1978 was so much worse that in retrospect the events of 1977 may have seemed minor. The most serious changes of 1977 were harsher living conditions and, above all, more numerous and more systematic executions. This is true both in formerly benign, well-fed areas such as Damban 25 and in places like Pursat where food supply marginally improved. The impression made on people by the events of 1977 comes through most strikingly when, in speaking of their flight from the new Salvation Front-PRK regime in 1979-80, and forced to admit that it has been very benign, they exclaim, "but the other communists were ‘loose’ in the beginning too, and only became intolerable in 1977."269

From the evidence about the purges of 1977 it is possible to infer economic, political, and ideological motives. The economic motive was reorganization of the cooperatives to produce a larger surplus for export or to stock in preparation for the expected war with Vietnam; and to that effect communal dining was finally imposed on the entire country. That reorganization, both in itself and in relation to the anti-Vietnamese belligerency, seems to have been opposed by many important cadres, particularly in the Northwest and North, and they were removed. The Eastern administration was strong enough to resist, by holding back rice from Phnom Penh, until 1978.

Their removal also served the political goal of destroying all leading communists who had belonged to, or supported, the pre-1960 party which had cooperated with the Vietnamese, who wished to follow -a similar line, and who were most strongly represented in the East. The

Pol Pot faction which was emerging victorious in the intraparty struggle was strongly chauvinistic and considered Vietnam as the principal enemy.

Ideologically, the 1977 purges served to emphasize the poor-peasant bias of the Cambodian revolution. This does not mean that poor peasants liked communal dining; but unlike the evacuees, base peasants in most places seem to have been allowed to supplement communal rations with other food which they prepared at home, and the poor-peasant populist tendency to seek revenge against the city and exploit its former inhabitants was reinforced. Everywhere there was a renewed insistence that base peasants should occupy all positions of privilege or responsibility; and the purge was felt with special severity in those parts of the Northwest where an effort had been made to utilize the skills of doctors, teachers, and other educated persons.

All efforts in this direction were suppressed, and in at least one reeducation center of the Southwest there were mass executions.270

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Class enemies in 1977 were again in more danger than at any time since April-May 1975. Surviving Lon Nol officers were again sought

out for execution, and intellectuals found a new expediency in anonymity.

Interestingly, the changes of 1977 often meant an initial improvement in the life of those new people who had lived in poor food areas, indicating that there may have been some real economic rationality in the measures taken. The improvement, though, was sometimes shortlived, and nearly always because food was being taken away rather than used to feed the people.271

A second major reorganization took place in 1978, the motives of which seem mainly political; and to some extent it marks a reversal in the ideological aspect of the previous policies. Thus the well-organized Southwestern cooperatives were told that the former distinction between base and new people had been abolished and all were to be considered equal. The same overturning of revolutionary status distinctions is manifest in the reports of people from less well-informed zones, where suddenly old base peasants lost their privileges and were subject to the same harsh discipline as city evacuees. In some cases whole settlements of new people received a promotion in status; and, as refugee cadres relate, there was a corresponding resentment among the base peasantry.272

There were also, in 1978, signs of a change in attitude toward intellectuals, and in a few cases such people were taken from their work site or detention center and given work in the administration. Treatment of those who had returned from abroad improved, and renewal of the educational system was discussed.273

One such intellectual was Thiounn Chhum, whose three brothers had long worked for the revolution, and who in August 1978 was taken from a rice field near Oudong to reorganize the finances of DK. According to him, "production had increased to such a degree that barter no longer sufficed … we were going to have a market economy, and for that we needed both coins and banknotes … which were already ordered and printed."274 This is somewhat disingenuous. Banknotes had indeed been printed, but already in 1975 when a bank was part of the original revolutionary plan, later dropped. The record on production is mixed, and no figures are available. In some places, such as forest regions which had never before produced food, there was indeed an increase; but elsewhere, and inexcusably, it had declined. If reintroduction of a market economy was really being planned, it was probably less for the economic reason alleged by Thiounn Chhum than for the political goal of rallying the surviving urban evacuees to a solid front against Vietnam.

These new developments in the rest of the country were accompanied in the East by the most murderous purge ever, which continued the political tendency of the previous years, and the main purpose of which was to wipe out all communists of the old party who were suspected of harboring sentiments of socialist fraternalism toward Vietnam. Although many new people were also victims of that purge, and in some parts of the country living conditions for everyone became harsher, the rest of 1978 saw a relative relaxation of hostility toward the former urban folk which is consonant with the increase in chauvinism. The strongest

anti-Vietnamese sentiments before the revolution had been among the urban population, not the peasantry, and the Pol Pot regime must have hoped to rally them in the struggle to come. The cause of anti-Vietnamese chauvinism was leading to a modification of the poor-peasant populism which had guided DK leadership since 1975.275

The changes had come too late. The evacuees were too hostile to DK to fight for it, even against the Vietnamese; and the peasantry, having seen the quality of their own lives decline in spite of a revolution made for them, and then in 1978 losing some of their privileges, remained apathetic.

## Themes and variations, a postscript.

Confirmation of some of the zonal, regional, and temporal analyses presented here is found in Honda Katuiti's Journey to Cambodia, which I first saw in January 1983, long after the above had been written; and it is particularly interesting in that his investigation was carried out among survivors within Cambodia in 1980, in contrast to the work of myself and most other researchers, who worked with refugees outside the country.

In general, Honda in his "quantitative analysis" of specific families and small communities concentrated on worst case areas, and many regions were not touched at all. He also ignored, in the presentation of his results, the significance of some of the areal and temporal

distinctions, but the support for the “themes and variations” presented above is nevertheless striking.

In this respect his first chapter, on people he met in Phnom Penh, is weakest, but in spite of that, one of his first cases (pp. 23-25), a family which had lost 33 of 35 members, had been sent to Damban 5 of northern Battambang in 1975.

Honda’s second chapter deals with two hamlets just south and southwest of Phnom Penh which had been squarely in the battleground between Lon Nol and revolutionary forces between 1972 and 1975, and who had been removed as ‘new’ people after the latter date. There is no breakdown of deaths by date or location, but the presumably weakened condition of people who had spent 3 years in the middle of a battlefield undoubtedly contributed to the 173 deaths from hunger among a peasant group. Another 160 had been killed in the various places to which they had been removed.

Nevertheless, in the “qualitative analysis” of certain selected families from those hamlets, one which had lost 10 of 16 members had been sent to Pursat, and another in which all had survived had gone to Saang. Another family which had lost half its members had moved to Battambang, to an unspecified damban (pp. 58-60).

The most significant of Honda’s results are from the East. In Svay Rieng he investigated two groups of families in Sambuor hamlet, khum of Prasot (Prasaut). Of the total of 182 persons alive in 1975, there had been 74 DK deaths, but only 4 occurred under the original

East Zone administration before 1978. The rest were the result of removal of much of the East Zone population in 1978, mostly, in this case, to Pursat, but also to Kandal, Battambang, and within the East Zone itself (pp. 70-82).

In another part of Svay Rieng, Prasaut village in Srok Svay Tiep, conditions had in general been worse, apparently resulting from a first purge in late 1977, but the relative results were the same: of 95 people 10 died before 1978, all but one in late 1977, but 14 more died after the upheaval of 1978 (pp. 89-95).

Chapter 4, on Kompong Speu, Western Zone, reflects the generally severe conditions reported by my informants; and in chapter 5, on the North-Central Zone, apparently Damban 41, Honda presents several base peasant families with generally good survival rates, and who reported massacres of new people in their area in 1978.

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Democratic Kampuchea - a Non-Standard Total View

The description of living experiences in the different parts of Democratic Kampuchea, even limited to the incomplete and often very biased information of urban refugees or former communist cadres, has demonstrated that the entire country cannot be fitted

into any single scenario. It also proves that the truth was much more complex than the situation as portrayed by anti-communist western media, by pro-revolutionary sympathizers, or by the regime itself, and would dishearten all three of those groups.

The analysis of conditions of life by zones invalidates many elements of the STV, yet even in most of the 'good' areas, conditions were not what the regime claimed to have planned nor what outside sympathizers wanted to believe.

The groups marked in 1975 for execution as a result of central policy decisions were quite small, yet the total number of executions carried out was large enough to cast serious discredit on the regime. It is not a sufficient excuse to say that most of them may have been, on local initiative, going far beyond central policy, for the regime may have been responsible for the conditions permitting that type of local initiative to flourish.

There was never an intention to wipe out all educated people, or all doctors, all teachers, all engineers, or even all Lon Nol officers, and this was true even in special detention camps considered by former inmates as prisons.276 Nevertheless, the educated groups suffered relatively more than others, which was contrary to the expectation of sympathizers; and probably about half the doctors remaining in Cambodia in April 1975 perished - a figure large enough to provide legitimate ammunition for anti-DK observers and create confusion in the ranks of regime supporters.

In almost ail regions, deaths from hunger or from illness exacerbated by hunger exceeded executions except during the worst purges, something which in itself is a serious blot on the government of a country where starvation can be avoided simply by giving people the freedom to forage for themselves, as has been proven since 1979.277

And although there is no evidence which permits the extrapolation of the worst death tolls - 2-3 million - bandied about in the anti-DK press, the numbers of deaths over normal, from whatever cause, are a serious indictment of a regime committed to the regeneration of its country.

The purpose of this book, however, is neither blame nor exculpation, which may seem to emerge from some of the place-by-place descriptions in the foregoing pages; and it is now necessary to take a broader view of the whole, infer the policies behind the zonal diversities, and examine certain subjects from a country-wide perspective.

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After the victory of April 1975 the government which was presented to the world was the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia (RGNUC) headed by Sihanouk as Chief of State, Penn Nouth as Prime Minister, and Khieu Samphan as Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of National Defense, and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.278

Although there was no immediate announcement from Phnom Penh of the full list of top government personnel, the names of Hu Nim and Hou Yuon were soon heard on Phnom Penh radio with the titles of Minister of Information and Propaganda and Minister of the Interior, Cooperatives and Communal Reforms which they had held in the RGNUC before April 17, and it was assumed that other members of that government were still in place.279

Two other men who had been given prominence along with Khieu Samphan, Hu Nim, and Hou Yuon in a 1972 publication of the RGNUC were Poc Deuskoma, “Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs,” and Tiv Ol, position unstated. Photographs of these five men filled the first 19 pages of that publication; and then on pages 20-25 there were photographs of another group:

Saloth Sar, “Vice-President of the Supreme Military Command and Chief of the Army Military Directorate”; Nuon Chea, “Vice-President of the Supreme Military Command and Chief of the Army Political Directorate”; Koy Thuon, “Vice-Minister of Finance”; Ieng Sary, “Special Envoy” from the interior of Cambodia to Sihanouk and

sections of the revolutionary organizations outside the country; Son Sen, “Chief of the General Staff”; and the two sisters, Khieu Thirith (Mrs. leng Sary) and Khieu Ponnary (Mrs. Saloth Sar), entitled respectively “Vice-Minister of Education and Youth” and "Vice-President of the FUNK Committee for the Capital."280

From the arrangement of the booklet it was clear that the two groups were in different locations in Cambodia, and that the first was being given more importance than the second. It would thus already have been reasonable to assume that there might be some factional differences within the Cambodian revolution; and one of the salient differences was that three of the second group (Saloth Sar, leng Sary, and Son Sen) had deserted Phnom Penh for the maquis in 1963 just at the time when Cambodian relations with the United States were worsening and Sihanouk seemed, to the outside world, to be turning leftward, while the members of the first group had continued to work with the Sangkum until 1967.

Because of the Sihanouk factor, it appeared to me that the difference might be less one of ideology or policy than the need to coddle Sihanouk, who probably resented the men of 1963 more than those of 1967.281

Both those groups had something significant in common. They were intellectuals, and most had studied in France, returning to Cambodia between 1953 and 1959 (Nuon Chea studied law in Bangkok). This set them apart from another group of veteran Cambodian revolutionaries and communists, those who had started fighting the

French in the 1940s in league with the Vietnamese, who then formed the first Cambodian Communist organization in 1951, and who in 1954 either went to Vietnam ('Khmer-Hanoi') or stayed to form the legal Pracheachon ("Citizen") Group which published newspapers and contested elections until 1962. The near total omission of them, except for Nuon Chea, from the RGNUC should have implied factional divisions, but again the Sihanouk factor, his known aversion for those first revolutionaries, made it appear that simple expedience might have been the explanation. In a 1973 publication, after Sihanouk's trip to the liberated zone of Cambodia, both groups of the 1972 publication were finally shown together.282

For anyone who studied the publications of the RGNUC it was clear that much of the composition of its government was in order to conciliate Sihanouk and bore little connection with the realities of power, which in most cases lay in the hands of the vice-ministers within the country while the ministers, old Sihanouk-era politicians, remained in Peking. What was not realized, however, was that the second group of the 1972 publication included some of the top men in the Communist Party - Saloth Sar, Nuon Chea, and Ieng Sary - and that they were more important in the revolutionary struggle than the better-known men of the first group.

Signs of this began to appear within a few months of the 1975 victory.

Poc Deuskoma and Hou Yuon simply disappeared and no certain information about their fate has yet turned up.283 Then in August

1975 Ieng Sary was named Deputy Premier in charge of Foreign Affairs and Son Sen, Deputy Premier in charge of Defense.284 The Sihanoukists did not even return to Phnom Penh until September, which underscored their figurehead role, and we now know that they were incarcerated and played no political role until a few were released and reintegrated into the administration in 1978.

What was unexpected in the 1975 line-up, even more than in the 1972 booklet, was the lack of any mention of the pre-1954 veteran communists, such as Non Suon, whose names had figured in battlefront news of 1970-75.

The situation became a little clearer in April 1976 when, following national elections held on March 20, Sihanouk resigned. Penn Nouth announced the dissolution of the cabinet “known formerly as the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia”; and on April 14, 1976 the composition of a new government structure was partially revealed.285

At the top was a State Presidium with Khieu Samphan as Chairman, So Phim as First Vice-Chairman, and Nhim Ros as Second Vice-Chairman.

Below this was the cabinet consisting of Pol Pot, Prime Minister; Ieng Sary, Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs; Vorn Vet, Deputy Prime Minister for Economy; Son Sen, Deputy Prime Minister for National Defense; Hu Nim, Minister of Propaganda and Information; Thiounn Thioeun, Minister of Public Health; Ieng Thirith, Minister of

Social Action; Toch Phoeun, Minister of Public Works; and Yun Yat (Mrs. Son Sen), Minister of Culture, Education, and Learning.

Under the Ministry of Economy there were also six committees whose chairmen held the rank of minister. Their names were not made public at the time, but five of them have since been identified as follows: Agriculture, Non Suon; Industry, Cheng An; Commerce, Koy Thuon; Communications, Mey Prang; and Rubber Plantations, Phuong. The head of the sixth committee, for Energy, has never been identified.286

There was in addition a Tribunal Committee headed by Kang Chap; and of some importance also, as we shall see, was the 10-member Standing Committee of the newly elected assembly, headed by Nuon Chea.

Several of the names announced in the reorganization had not been made public before and were not well known even to specialist scholars of Cambodia. Among them, finally, were some of the old revolutionary ICP-'Khmer Hanoi'-Pracheachon Group, such as the two vice-chairmen of the State Presidium, So Phim and Nhim Ros, who were also secretaries respectively of the East and Northwest Zones; Non Suon of the Agricultural Committee; Phuong of the Rubber Committee; and Nuon Chea, Mat Ly, and Chou Chet of the National Assembly Standing Committee.287

Another new name, Vorn Vet, was the nom-de-guerre of Sok Thuok, who had run the Special Zone around Phnom Penh during the war.

Although a returned student of the Saloth Sar-Ieng Sary generation, descriptions of his personal relations, his management of industry, and his eventual fate all indicate that he may have favored the anti-Pol Pot faction.288

Interesting, with respect to factional conflict, is that Pol Pot may not yet have been top man. A week later, the Chinese ambassador's congratulatory toast and a message from Vietnam in honor of the new government's first anniversary both named Pol Pot only third, after Khieu Samphan as head of the Presidium and Nuon Chea as chairman of the assembly's Standing Committee.289 If 1975 revealed the hidden importance of the 1963 intellectual defectors from Phnom Penh and the reorganization of April 1976 confirmed it by giving them domination of the cabinet, the latter also demonstrated that the older generation of communists were maintaining themselves in certain key positions of power and had thus been there all along.

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In fact, the choice of structure for the central government organs seems to indicate a real effort at checks and balances among separated powers. Although the existence of a communist party had not yet been revealed, the three top men in the cabinet were also in its politburo with Pol Pot as secretary-general. Son Sen, Ieng Thirith,

and Yun Yat were certainly of the Pol Pot faction, and Vorn Vet may also at the time have been considered an ally.

The career of Kang Chap of the Tribunal Committee shows that he was a Pol Pot man too.290

The State Presidium would seem to have no necessary function, and to be a mere appendage in a state such as DK, but it may have been designed as a counterweight to the cabinet. Notwithstanding their positions in the Politburo and Central Committee respectively, So Phim and Nhim Ros, powerful zonal leaders with their own armed forces and from a different party background, must already have been seen as rivals to Pol Pot. At that time the position of Khieu Samphan is unclear, and he may also have figured in that countervailing tendency.

Another reorganization occurred on September 27, 1976 when Pol Pot was replaced by Nuon Chea as acting Prime Minister, a change which was maintained until at least October 19. Then on October 25 the name 'Pol Pot' reappeared as Prime Minister, again in third place after Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea, on a message sent to Hua Kuo-Feng.291

In a list of plots against the regime which Ieng Sary revealed in 1978 he called the reorganization of April 1976 an attempted coup by pro-Vietnamese traitors, which at first appears absurd given that Khieu Samphan became Chief of State and Pol Pot was named Prime Minister. He was obviously referring, though, to the

prominence given rivals from the old Communist Party in the State Presidium, Standing Committee of the Assembly, and the committees of the Ministry of Economy, placing Pol Pot, Secretary of the party, in mere third rank.

It would appear that the coup nearly succeeded with Pol Pot's deposition in September; but he returned the following month and brutal revenge soon began to fall on his enemies.

Over the next two years Non Suon (Nov. 1976), Koy Thuon (Jan. 1977), Toch Phoeun (Jan. 1977), Hu Nim (April 1977), So Phim (May 1978), Nhim Ros (June 1978), Vorn Vet, Cheng An, and Mey Prang (Nov. 1978) were arrested and executed, and the same fate befell Tiv Ol (June 1977), who had featured prominently in the 1972 propaganda booklet and who was a member of Hu Nim's ministry.292 Of the original 1976 cabinet, the survivors were only Pol Pot's own group of 1963 defectors plus Dr. Thiounn Thioeun; and they were joined at the top level of government by Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea, lone survivors within the government of their own groups.

From the pattern of shifts in the composition of the small ruling group, it is already possible to discern that the main conflict was between the Pol Pot group of intellectuals on one side, and on the other the members of the pre-1960 communist organization together with intellectual leftists who did not follow Saloth Sar/Pol Pot to the maquis in 1963. Thus the policies which, as we have seen, changed conditions in nearly all parts of Cambodia from 1977 would have

been Pol Pot policies, opposed both by veteran communists and leftist intellectuals. From the confessions of Non Suon, the first of the central government members to be arrested, it is clear that his activities as a communist before 1962, and not alleged failings in his official capacities, were the major concern of his interrogators; and they were particularly disturbed by the close relations existing between the veteran communists and Vietnam. Thereafter politics in DK became a series of purges to physically eliminate Pol Pot's rivals, first all members of the pre-1960 communist group and others believed to sympathize with their policies. That the purges were connected directly with Pol Pot's return to power is clear from the Tuol Sleng list of 242 important cadres. Only 10 were arrested before October 25, 1976, and of them 4 were military men in an outright armed rebellion.

After Non Suon came the turn of Koy Thuon of the Commerce Committee, a logical target for a faction which wished to abolish commerce and money, and he had already been preceded to prison by two members of his service. He was also Secretary of the Northern Zone and his arrest signalled a thorough purge of its higher cadres and those of Region 106 (Siem-reap), which was to be merged with it. Between January and March 1977, 32 of them went to Tuol Sleng and 5 more followed in May and June.

Soon after that began the purge of the Northwest, starting with the Secretary of Damban 2 at the end of March. Then between June and September, 35 more top cadres were arrested. Nhim Ros survived

until June 1978, probably powerless after all of his old subordinates had been removed.293

Finally in 1978 the last of Pol Pot's rivals at the top levels of party and government, So Phim and Vorn Vet, were liquidated in May and November respectively, the former along with most of the cadres and large numbers of the population of the Eastern Zone. They were preceded in March by the West Zone's Chou Chet, not a central government figure, but a veteran communist and former leader of the Pracheachon Group.

The surviving evidence does not permit a description of the way in which the Pol Pot faction undermined and destroyed its rivals, some of whom, such as Nhim Ros and So Phim, must have had their own power base.

As Heder has surmised, in April 1975 Pol Pot, Ieng Sary, and Khieu Samphan probably had few troops of their own, and in a power struggle they required the support of some zonal leader. The alliance, we now know, was made first with Mok, leader of the Southwest, and with Pok, who controlled the Northern troops even when he was second to Koy Thuon. These two men were of completely different background from any of the other leadership factions, neither intellectuals nor veteran communists, but simply peasant or small town rebels; and in retrospect they can be seen as the natural allies of Pol Pot and as the zonal chiefs least likely to be sympathetic to the So Phim line or to the policies which Koy Thuon and the Northwest leadership wished to implement.294 The first step was

the unification of the armies in July 1975, which placed them all under Son Sen. The security service was also clearly loyal to Pol Pot, and the struggle pitted the Cabinet and most of the party leadership plus the Southwest, the military and security services against the rival zone leaders and veteran communists in the central government.

The rivals were probably much less unified, and in the climate of suspicion which prevailed they may have been ready to believe that certain former colleagues were traitors. In May 1976 an authentic armed uprising had been led by Chan Chakrey, a veteran with East Zone connections. When Non Suon was arrested in early November on his return from a trip abroad, he was immediately asked if he knew “what had been going on near Angkor Chey” where he ran a state farm; and the significance of this has been revealed by a Damban 25 survivor who said there were ‘white’ (anti-government guerilla) forces operating there, ignored by Non Suon. The coup against the North was probably presented successfully as defeat of a revolt with foreign support, and the Eastern leadership may have agreed that the North-west cadres should be removed for incompetence. Revolutionary secrecy and compartmentalization had also produced a situation in which people might disappear for some time without being missed by old friends. When Non Suon was arrested he was told that no one knew of his arrest and that if he cooperated in providing information he could go back to work with no blemish on his reputation.

In his study of the period, Kiernan has determined that between April and October 1976, when Pol Pot's rivals may have been trying to force him out, a number of interesting policy changes appeared to be taking place.295

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Border incidents with Vietnam decreased, fruitful consultations were held, and delegations were exchanged. Cambodia also took a stance similar to Vietnam and contrary to China on recognition of the post-Allende regime in Chile. A conflict over the history of the Cambodian Communist Party - whether it was founded in 1951, and thus in cooperation with Vietnam, or in 1960 and strictly nationalist - was resolved in favor of the former, in early October while Pol Pot was still out of the picture. Some steps were taken to open up relations with other countries, and contacts were even made with UNICEF and U.S. firms in order to secure medical supplies.

Kiernan also attempted to discover significant correlations between changes in Chinese politics and the factional struggle in Cambodia, and in that connection it is interesting to note that Pol Pot's consolidation of power coincided with the Thanin Kraivixien government in Thailand (Oct. 1976-Oct. 1977). From 1973 until October 1976 the Thai government, following a factional line that

goes back to the late 1940s, tried to develop a policy of friendship toward all the new Indochinese governments.

The Thanin regime, on the contrary, adopted an extreme anti-communist stance, but, along with succeeding governments, would have favored any developments in Cambodia which were inimical to Vietnam. The Pol Pot line as it developed would have been much more disturbing to the first Thai faction than to the second.296

It is significant that not only did the massive purges of cadres begin after October 1976, but purges of other categories of people as well, which had generally begun after Pol Pot's government had been installed in April 1976, came to an almost complete stop in July-August-September when Pol Pot must have been going into eclipse, and then again increased to their greatest extent after October.297

Democratic Kampuchea, then, as it developed after 1976, with policies which alienated nearly all classes, was not just the result of 'Communism' but of the actions of one faction, opposed by most party veterans and experienced cadres. In support of the Pol Pot faction at the center was the regional administration of the Southwest, composed of men who were neither veterans of the old party nor intellectuals; and they supplied the muscle without which the purges could not have taken place. The reasons why that alliance occurred and was successful will be explored in the final chapter.

To accommodate the victims of the purges who were important enough to merit central government attention, a new detention and interrogation center, now known conventionally as “Tuol Sleng,” was set up in and around the former Ponhea Yat High School in the Tuol Svay Prey district of Phnom Penh. The official DK designation for the center was “S. 21,” which as a unit had existed since at least 1975 but not in that location. This comes forth from the confession of a former guard and interrogator named Kantha who was himself eventually arrested for sexual abuse of female prisoners, and who stated that he had been assigned to S. 21 in September 1975, but was not sent to Tuol Sleng until June 1976. He may have come in the first construction detail, since another dossier says S. 21 did not move to Tuol Sleng until July 1977. Before going to Tuol Sleng, Kantha mentioned assignments in three other locations, and in fact S. 21 could well have operated several offices or prisons throughout the DK years. 298

According to Kantha, the area of S. 21 at Tuol Sleng was very large, extending over nearly 1.15 sq. km., and the prisoners were kept in “Tuol Svay Prey school.” From the confessions of former guards such as Kantha, there can be no doubt that Tuol Sleng was indeed a prison and that torture was systematically used, while the size and location prove that it can only have been an organ created by the central government leadership and its excesses thus not attributable to Vietnamese infiltrators as DK leaders have claimed.299 The purpose of the interrogations was in most cases to force those arrested to admit working for either the Vietnamese or the CIA, with the latter generally emphasized in the earlier confessions, particularly those of

non-communist intellectuals and technicians, and the former given prominence in the confessions of communist veterans. Often, according to Kantha, the interrogators, knowing what was wanted, simply encouraged the prisoners to provide long lists of names as CIA or pro-Vietnamese collaborators without any regard for accuracy. That could get them into trouble if discovered by their superiors, for apparently the top DK authorities really believed that differences of opinion over policy were the results of treason in favor of foreign enemies.

The chief of S. 21 was a man named Khaing Gek Iev, alias Deuch, who attended high school in Kompong Thom in the early 1960s, later became a teacher, and from 1968 to 1970 was imprisoned for political activities. During the war he was in the Special and Southwest Zones, where he probably worked with Mok and Vorn Vet. The latter was at the time not only secretary of the Special Zone but the RGNUC Vice-Minister of Security, and it may well have been he who started Deuch on his career. It is perhaps also significant that Kang Chap of the 1976 Tribunal Committee had been an important Southwest cadre who could have known Deuch during the war. Although his origins are in the same province as Pol Pot, and his chief assistant at Tuol Sleng, Mom Nay, had also lived in Kompong Thom, that is not enough to postulate a Kompong Thom mafia running the most unsavory aspects of DK.300

More significantly Deuch was too young to have participated in the ICP struggles against the French, and he grew up in a period when anti-Vietnamese sentiments were being encouraged by the

government and when anti-bourgeois feelings were almost inevitable in a poor rural boy trying to become an intellectual. Of course, many other people of Deuch's age and similar background joined the revolution when he did, and they did not all become directors of torture chambers. Indeed some were his victims, so no simple class explanation of Deuch and Tuol Sleng is possible. It is not surprising, however, that a Pol Pot security organ was in the hands of someone of that background, and it is unlikely that Tuol Sleng could have been run as it was under the direct supervision of either an ICP-Pracheachon veteran or one of the older intellectuals.

A possibly unique glimpse into the character of Deuch is provided by the experience of Francois Bizot, a French ethnologist captured by the Cambodian revolutionaries in 1970 and held for several months, during which he was personally interrogated by Deuch, without physical torture, and then released, having convinced his captors that he was not a spy. He discovered that Deuch believed all Cambodians of differing viewpoints to be traitors and liars, and that he personally beat prisoners who would not tell the 'truth,' a matter which drove him into a rage. From Bizot's impressions of Deuch, the cases cited in note 223 above, and the Tuol Sleng dossiers, I am convinced that, in contrast to the Stalin show trials (note by doc reposter: anti-stalinism), Deuch and his circle believed their victims to be guilty. Of course, as Carney has written, there was "real activity of various foreign powers," adding disingenuously, "particularly the Vietnamese."301

I do not believe that personalities are very important in explaining the DK phenomenon, particularly in the dearth of personal detail which prevails, and it is perhaps worthwhile to note briefly that none of the DK leaders were ever considered evil persons by prewar contemporaries. Saloth Sar/Pol Pot in particular is described by those who knew him as soft-spoken, courteous, friendly, and kind; and similar qualities were attributed to Ieng Sary and Khieu Samphan among the surviving DK elite. Whatever the evil of their regime, none of it was predictable from their characters as observed in pre-revolutionary circumstances.

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## Political and Economic Issues

The first act of the victorious DK revolution, which immediately alienated many who had viewed it with sympathy, the forced evacuation of all towns, may be seen as in a way imposed by the situation and justified by certain apparently rational arguments: the lack of food in Phnom Penh, the necessity to put everyone to work productively, and the need to thoroughly neutralize political opposition. In assessing that move we should not make the mistake of urban fetishism - considering cities as good per se and deserving of preservation whatever conditions prevail. Unlike a western industrial city, Phnom Penh did not produce wealth, but drained it

from the country for an unproductive elite. In this it was like many Asian cities whose uncontrolled growth has been judged pernicious by quite respectable non-Marxist specialists. Neither should one commit the error of peasant fetishism, believing that return to the countryside will solve all problems.

In April 1975 there was certainly more food outside Phnom Penh than within the city, and had 1.5-2 million people been allowed to remain, there could well have been more starvation and epidemics than really occurred in 1975-76. It was also reasonable in the national emergency following the war, even without a revolutionary goal, to put everyone into productive work, first of all growing food, until the situation had stabilized - potentially a matter of only one year if crops were good. Even in the extreme case of sending people to open up and cultivate forest areas, there was a theoretically rational ground for the decision. The soil in newly cleared forest may be extremely rich, and can yield unusually good crops for the first few harvests.

Eyewitness accounts from revolutionary areas of Kompong Thom in 1972-73 relate that yields from jungle plots were twice as high as from recently abandoned village land.302

Politically, too, there was little choice so long as the revolutionary forces intended to consolidate their victory. The new regime, partly because it had already massacred many trained cadres among those who returned from Vietnam, had no more than a handful of administrators used to urban problems, while in Phnom Penh there

were tens of thousands of experienced people who would soon have begun to subvert the revolutionary regime either through organizing within the country or in liaison with foreign forces.

As the Chilean case shows, even a very benign socialist regime may arouse the hatred of traditional class enemies and suffer destruction if it does not have full control of all armed forces and police.

To be sure, the DK forces had defeated the Khmer Republic militarily, but the latter still had numerous personnel and much equipment, especially in Phnom Penh, and the city could easily have demoralized DK peasant soldiers sent to occupy it. The fate of the Mexican revolution after 1914 shows how easily a peasant army can win a war yet lose a peace when the cities are left intact.303

Even if the Cambodian communists had made sincere efforts to win the Phnom Penh population to their cause, they would probably have been as detested by their class enemies as Allende's government, and as open to subversion from outside; and it is unlikely that such a policy of conciliation would have had sufficient success. In effect, the only alternative to evacuation or incarceration of the Phnom Penh military and civilian bureaucracy would have been to turn the administration back over to the defeated enemy, who had already shown incompetence in running and feeding the country.

Even in the hypothetical-utopian case in which the DK leadership, recognizing its incapacity to administer, would have said, yes, we offer the administration of Phnom Penh to all old officials except the

seven main traitors,304 such a decision could probably not have been enforced on their rank and file, who had not sacrificed and overcome all odds for several years in order to give up victory to the defeated enemy. If there was excessive violence beyond that growing inevitably out of the situation, it was due in the last analysis to those who imposed the war on Cambodia;305 and if anyone suggests that foreign aid could have obviated the DK solution for the towns, I ask him or her to look back over the experiences of Laos and Vietnam, where cities were not evacuated and atrocities were few, and where foreign aid, least of all from the United States, has not been noticed in significant amounts.

Although at first sight the evacuation of the cities and concentration of the entire population in agriculture in the emergency conditions of 1975 appears rational, the rationality may have been more apparent than real.

Perhaps half the people in Phnom Penh in 1975 were villagers who had fled the war and who could easily have been sent home and put back into productive work. Most of them were probably eager to go home, and in their case the evacuation can hardly be called ‘forced.’ 306 The remainder of perhaps 1 million genuine urbanites, however, with little or no experience in peasant agriculture, could not have been expected to fare well unless introduced to work gradually while living thoroughly mixed with old peasants under conditions of equality. Such a policy was followed at first in much of Damban 25, the East Zone, and Damban 505 with satisfactory results. Even in other parts of the Southwest, in 1975, and in certain ‘good’ areas

elsewhere, evacuated city people were put to work in a productive way. In much of the Northwest, North, and other parts of the Southwest, however, the new people were either thrown into forest areas on their own without proper material support or transformed into a pariah class to be exploited by the base peasantry. In such conditions they could not possibly produce agricultural wealth, the potential of rich virgin soils was not realized, and much human potential was wasted.

Even given that initial error, things need not have turned out so badly as they did. The rice crop of 1975-76 was good, in most places rations at first improved, and even in subsequent years most people say production would have sufficed, but that it was not distributed to the populace. Had the available food been used first of all to feed the people, deaths from illness would have declined, resistance or indiscipline leading to execution would probably have been less too, and life in general would have been more tolerable. Had the national energies been then further devoted to development of the country, the quality of life could have improved year by year, and DK might ultimately have been a relative success, even though at a rather low level of material prosperity.

Thus even though a policy of concentrating everyone in productive work appears rational, the method chosen to implement that policy - forcing inexperienced urbanites into bare fields or forests without sufficient tools or guidance - was economically irrational, and the irrationality was compounded in succeeding years by further deliberate choices which like the initial policy must have been

dictated first of all by political or ideological considerations more than by a goal of economic recovery.

This is not to argue that the political and ideological considerations were in themselves necessarily irrational or that rational economic policies could have been pursued without attention simultaneously to political and ideological issues. I do argue, however, that Democratic Kampuchea failed as it did because of explicit political and ideological choices.

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The principal political consideration in April 1975 was the neutralization of the enemy's military and administrative apparatus which was still virtually intact in Phnom Penh. In numbers it would have been roughly 20,000 military officers and perhaps an equal number of higher-level civilian officials, very few of whom could have been won over to 'socialist' objectives.307 For the new regime to effectively take power, those men had to be killed, incarcerated, or dispersed around the country. In spite of all atrocity stories, and the record of very real mass executions, it is clear now that there never was a policy to kill all of that group, and imprisonment was probably never considered because of the drain on limited food supplies. They were in fact dispersed into the countryside along with everyone else; and the legitimate question which may be asked about the

implementation of that political goal is whether it could not have been realized without the rapid mass evacuation of everyone else as well.

It is a question which cannot be answered; and it might well have been impossible given the lack of sophistication of the revolutionary forces. It is likely, however, that if such a choice was ever considered it was overridden for ideological reasons. The ideological consideration which dictated the manner of evacuation and organization of the population was the goal of social levelling, forcing everyone into the situation of a poor peasant. That ideological goal may have been imposed by the very nature of the revolution, something to be discussed later, but it was not a 'communist' solution and it resulted in increasingly irrational use of human resources.308

Had it not been for this overriding ideological concern, and assuming that the enemy's administrative and military apparatus could have been immediately neutralized, the reorganization of the excess urban population could perhaps have been effected in another way. After the rural war refugees had been sent home, the healthy adults of working age not already employed in industry or other essential tasks could have been sent out to rural areas.

People already employed in useful industries or services would have remained at their jobs instead of being sent to the countryside, then called back, or replaced by inexperienced peasant youth. And of course, all those in the medical services would have been kept at

their jobs. The DK authorities cannot avoid severe blame for the misuse of those people with essential skills.

Finally, many of those urban residents who were neither usefully employed nor physically fit for real peasant life could have been obliged to contribute to their own support and general economic recovery through food production tasks, such as gardening, chicken and duck raising, in or near Phnom Penh, or in light handicraft production of useful articles within the city. This was in fact what many of them did after evacuation and they could have been put to the same work without the unnecessary hardship of relocation.

Such an alternative policy, however, would have left many urban residents in a life of at least marginal ease and privilege compared with the revolutionary peasantry, and might not have been tolerated by the latter.

This brings us again to the nature of the Cambodian revolution, which will be treated in chapter 5 below.

With all but a handful of the population put into agricultural labor, the first DK economic goal was a food supply which would feed the country and provide a large surplus, particularly of rice, for export. It had long been known that Cambodia's exceedingly low rice yield could be increased by irrigation and fertilizer, and development in those two areas, as is obvious from refugee accounts, was given priority. Vast systems of canals and dams were planned and dug; and they changed many of the country's irregular rice plains into

enormous checker boards. As for fertilizer, it could at first only be of the natural variety, and an important task in all cooperatives was the collection of both animal and human excrement for application to the fields.

It was believed that with the new supplies of water and fertilizer, paddy yields should rise to 3 tons per hectare in single-crop areas, up from a prewar average of about 1 ton, while double-crop areas should produce 6 tons, targets which seem to have first been set for 1977, after a substantial irrigation infrastructure had been developed. On that assumption each cooperative was supposed to assure a rice supply of 312 kg of paddy per year (approximately 200 kg of milled rice) for every person, or over one-half kg of rice per day.

Although it was announced that the 1977 target had “on the average” been fulfilled, the 3-ton goal may only rarely have been attained, was certainly never generalized, and probably few new persons ever saw one-half kg of rice per day.309 In many places they were lucky to get half that much (1 can = 250 g.), and in the worst spots the supply declined to even less. Although true figures on rice production probably cannot be established due to loss of records, in early 1978 the government admitted that “in the past, enemy running dogs of all colors planted within our cooperatives sabotaged the … target … because some of our cadres and comrades did not pay enough attention to weeding out enemy agents.” Still later the authorities backtracked further, saying that in 1977 natural conditions had not been very favorable, but that the rice harvest was higher than in previous years, and the 1977-78 harvest had almost completely

fulfilled the 3-ton and 6-ton targets. For 1978 the new target was raised to 3.5 and 7 tons.310

According to Ouk Bun Chhoeun, PRK Minister of Justice and former official in Damban 21, the quotas cited above were fixed by the central government. The collection of rice was carried out by the khum or cooperative; and then the zone, which was responsible for transportation, decided on the amount to send to central authorities.

Former DK cadres in Thailand emphasized further the responsibility of the zonal administrations in deciding how rice was to be planted and the amount of the harvest to be forwarded to the central government. They were supposed to assure a guaranteed ration for their people and enough for their own troops, and in theory were supposed to put the needs of the people first. They also agreed on the important role of the khum in collecting the rice and in deciding at that low level the amount which could be sent to the center.311

It is alleged that the new irrigation systems never worked properly, although reports from people who observed them at the time are contradictory.

The entire truth is probably now impossible to determine, since there is general refusal to acknowledge that anything in DK worked properly. Many people also report that the arrogance of cadres unfamiliar with local conditions was a factor in low yields. They are alleged to have ignored peasant knowledge of local terrain and to have imposed unsuitable seed varieties or cultivation practices.

There is no doubt that technicians who could have given useful advice on dam and canal construction were ignored, and in this area too DK policy must take the blame.312

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Although, for whatever reasons the goal of 3 tons per hectare was not realized, the central authorities, it is alleged, were either misled by false reports by ‘traitors’ from below to believe that it was being achieved, or themselves refused to accept that there was any legitimate reason why it could not be. In some cases, apparently, zonal, regional, or cooperative authorities, afraid to admit they had failed to meet their quota, robbed their people of food rice to provide Phnom Penh with a surplus based on a 3-ton-per-hectare calculation.313 When discovered, this would bring down the wrath of Phnom Penh both for failure to meet the quota and for causing malnutrition. Other places kept back more food for the people, apparently admitting the plan could not be fulfilled, which also caused displeasure at the center. Some flexibility was provided local authorities by the possibility of fiddling population figures, given the poor quality of statistics; and a few of the very best areas, such as Damban 3, may have actually achieved their relatively good living standard by coming close to the quota. This was certainly true in some non-rice areas, such as Koh Sautin (Damban 22), where an

economy based on corn, supplemented by easily accessible fish, provided adequate food throughout the DK years.

So long as the central authorities believed that the 3-ton goal was either being realized or was feasible, tension throughout all levels was inevitable.

Those who suffered worst were the inhabitants of all but exceptional rice areas who had few other sources of food; and those who suffered least were the people living in areas where there was plenty of other food - fish for those near rivers, game in northern forests, corn and other vegetables in certain places, or even adequate opportunities for forage. In nearly all cases the new people suffered more than the base peasants, because when food supplies were more tightly controlled through communal dining, introduced everywhere by mid-1977, base peasants are said to have been able to eat extra food at home without incurring the same risks as new people. One interesting side effect of this class differentiation deserves note. Because of the DK contempt for currency, gold, and other valuables, city evacuees were rarely searched, and the wealthy residents of Phnom Penh often carried large sums with them for months, or even throughout the DK period. They could then engage in illegal, but often tolerated, black market trading with the base villagers or even with cadres, and the rich were able to survive better than the urban poor, contrary to what one would expect in a communist society.314

As rations diminished, rice gruel had to replace hard rice, and when communal dining had become standardized in the cooperatives in 1977, gruel was the usual fare. Rice gruel can be adequate, depending on its preparation, but often it was simply a means of disguising the lack of food. Besides rice and perhaps a minimum ration of fish, people in rice areas lived on what they could forage, depending on natural conditions and the attitude of local cadres. In some places foraging was forbidden, in others freely allowed. An interesting nuance on this matter from the experience of an old acquaintance who had survived the rice plains of Damban 4 is that searching frantically for the odd field crab might expend more energy than the prey could provide, and he decided to rest rather than forage when there was free time.

Considered at the zone level, the best food areas, first the East and second the Southwest, were those where communist organization was oldest and strongest. Even if yields fell short of quotas, they could resist pressures from the center either because of the favored ideological position of the Southwest or because of the strong local communist organization of the East.

Thus according to refugee cadres, most rice sent to Phnom Penh after the 1976 harvest came from the East, with some from the Southwest, North and Northwest. In 1977 and 1978, however, the East sent none at all, and refugee evidence is nearly unanimous that up to May 1978 life there was fairly tolerable.315 By 1978 food production was increasing in what had been the worst areas, and there was thus a new possibility of improving conditions of life and

further developing the country. By then, however, purges had destroyed the most capable cadres and totally alienated the new people. Economic recovery was then blocked anew by preparations for war with Vietnam, also a result of ideological choice.

In other economic areas, as well as in agriculture, rationality seems to have been overridden by political and ideological considerations.

Economic plans in existence at the end of the war in April 1975 still allowed for the possibility of introducing a new currency, and Non Suon had been assigned to the treasury administration, but by September all such plans had been scrapped and Non Suon was transferred to the central government's Agricultural Committee.316 The existence of such plans shows that what became the reality of DK over the next three years had not been the intention of the entire communist leadership. The circulation of money would ultimately have meant some kind of market sector affecting individuals. Even if everything sold on the market was from state production, it would imply some minimum freedom of choice in matters of daily consumption activities, and perhaps means that universal communal dining was not yet envisaged.

Rumors of such differences seeped down even to the new people. Pin Yathay wrote that in August 1975 cadres announced the imminent reintroduction of money; and he heard more about the two main communist factions, those east of the Mekong who were said to be moderates "favourable to Sihanouk," and the more radical Southwest faction.317

At the same time, in the Northwest, Khek Ben, secretary of Damban 4, was apologizing to the population for the uncomfortable living conditions and promising that within eight months they would be able to return home, schools would be reopened, and currency reintroduced.318

This may mean that there is some truth in the belief expressed by refugees that the original Northwest and North Zone authorities were in conflict with Phnom Penh over the suppression of all personal freedom or basic market dealings.

Another area of policy conflict or incoherence was in the organization of industry. The official rhetoric of DK, which must be distinguished from genuine policy, never denied the importance of industry, and Phnom Penh radio broadcasts frequently reported on alleged successes in one or another branch. According to this rhetoric, industry was to be rebuilt “in line with the slogan ‘everything should serve rice production’”;319 and in late 1978 Pol Pot said policy was “to build our industries toward establishing an independent economy.” Even a steel mill was being planned, and “our intention is to turn this country into an industrial country with a developed light industry, food industry, steel industry, mechanical equipment industry, oil industry, electric power industry, and coal production industry.” New technicians of poor-peasant background were to be trained by short-cut methods of basic theoretical education and practice.320 The rhetorical quality of that attention to industry is clear not only from Cambodia’s total lack of the material

conditions for some of the projected industries and the neglect of existing technicians after 1975, but from the circumstance that the speech was made not long after the “most vigorous working class movement in the country,” the railway workers, had been decimated, and a month before the liquidation of Vorn Vet, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, who had favored the use of old technicians.321

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Clearly more important then development of industry was the mania for self-reliance and building on a poor-peasant base without using technological expertise from the old society. Early in 1977 Khieu Samphan said, "whether the dams and reservoirs that we have built last only 5 or 10 years does not matter,"322 for the people would learn by doing (implicitly without the help of irrigation engineers like Pin Yathay); and a year later he admitted that the state of pharmaceutical products was “still of handicraft quality” in order that the country remain independent, sovereign, self-reliant, and self-sufficient, and in order to learn technology through practice.323

After the evacuation of Phnom Penh some skilled workers were kept on the job and others, particularly electrical and water service workers, including engineers, were later called back.324 In fact, there seem to have been a considerable number of such people; and a

policy of making rational use of skilled industrial personnel was supported by Vorn Vet until he was purged in late 1978.

For example, at the Phnom Penh tire factory the previous tempo of production was maintained, even though most of the several hundred workers had been evacuated and replaced by base peasants. About 30-40 skilled technical workers were, however, maintained at their posts, and some are still there today. One of them told his brother on the latter's return to Phnom Penh in 1979 that after April 17 the old workers who were assigned to remain at the factory were allowed up to three months to search for their families dispersed in the evacuation. He himself had gone to look for his wife, who had been working in a hospital, in her native district of Saang-Koh Thom and in Kompong Speu, but without success. After that the factory workers were not allowed to move around at all. They lived either within the factory or in nearby houses and grew their rice on adjacent land. Their rations were doled out more or less like those of other people, but they always had enough to prevent weakness or starvation. The factory's work force was smaller than before, but work time was increased, and there was a "200-300%" increase in production, which was entirely truck and tractor tires.325

Other brief but interesting comments on industry and the use of skilled workers come forth from the confessions of Non Suon at a point where he was responding to questions about one of his former subordinates, named Vet (not Vorn Vet), apparently also arrested. Vet was a skilled machinist who after April 1975 had been put in charge of a machine shop in Chom Chau in the Southwest Zone near Phnom

Penh. Then Non Suon had him transferred to his own Agricultural Committee and sent him around to factories and machine shops to collect machinery which they needed, a task in which he came into conflict with people who wished to keep the machinery for industry, rather than give it to Non Suon's agricultural projects.

Vet also checked the various ministries to see how many new people had been kept on in technical work, and found that in the Industry Committee in particular and in the Railway machine shop, "all" technicians were new people. Moreover, in the Southwest Zone machine shops there were even Lon Nol officers of lieutenant and captain rank who had been put to work because they were experts in the use of tractors. Vet wanted to transfer a number of those people, particularly the tractor specialists, to Non Suon's Agricultural Committee, but Suon warned that if they tried to use too many they could be in trouble later on. As he added, "in industry Vorn [Vet] runs things himself and can handle it, and the same is true in the Railway and in the Southwest," obviously alleging that the more secure political positions of Vorn Vet, the Railway officials, and the Southwest leadership enabled them to do things which might not be in accord with the regime's class policy. Non Suon may still not have been careful enough, for one of his former messengers said that he appointed a new person, a former school principal, as administrator of his state farm at Angkor Chey.326

Although some industries were considered essential, and a number of skilled new people continued to be employed after April 1975, work must have been disrupted to some extent by the introduction of

peasant youth to replace many other trained workers, and in 1977 even more of the old workers and skilled technicians were packed off to the fields or liquidated. A list of Tuol Sleng victims contains the names of 324 technical workers arrested and killed up to early 1978, most of them after late 1976 when the major purges had begun. The largest groups were from the Railway, which was evidently not so secure as Non Suon had thought, and from the electricity services, with only 60-odd from industrial plants. 327

Those arrests must have involved the acquiescence of Vorn Vet, and from some of the electrical workers' confessions it is clear that the authorities believed a CIA network was concealed among them, something against which Vorn Vet could not have argued even if he were not convinced. By late 1978, though, there must have been serious disagreements over policy, presumably resolved in favor of the anti-industrialists, in spite of Pol Pot's rhetoric, for Vorn Vet was purged and there were reports of skirmishes in Phnom Penh between armed factory workers and military units.328

The relative downgrading of industry and the proletariat represents another case of economic irrationality and indicates an attitude which, together with the abolition of currency, fits poor-peasant utopian ideology rather than Marxism-Leninism.

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## Postwar returnees

Equally irrational and in accord with poor-peasant utopianism was the treatment of several hundred intellectuals who had been studying or working abroad in 1975, most of whom were revolutionary sympathizers, and who wished to return to participate in what they saw as the reconstruction of their country.

During the Sihanouk-Lon Nol period (1941-75) many of Cambodia's intellectuals opposed both the form of government and its policies, and probably most of those intellectual opponents considered themselves on the 'left' and were so considered by the government. The most genuine leftists were those, including many of the top DK leadership, who joined the revolutionary maquis in the 1960s. Others remained at their jobs or went overseas for education, and sometimes engaged in anti-government publicity.

All of them welcomed the outcome of the war, and those who found themselves abroad in April 1975 not only refused to believe atrocity stories of the B/P-Ponchaud type, but wished to return to participate in the reorganization of Cambodia. They generally assumed that because of their education and attitude they would be welcomed back and given responsible administrative, technical or educational tasks.

Beginning in late 1975. several hundred were able to return to Cambodia, but afterward nothing more was heard of them and their

fate became the subject of rumors, the most extreme of which was that they had been executed at the airport on arrival.329. That rumor at least was untrue. Some of them were eventually executed after periods of varying length in reeducation camps, prisons, or work sites; and the few military officers among them may have been executed with dispatch; but the majority still survive.330

In Khao I Dang, I met two of the returnees and received the long written report of another, and there were two more of the group among the people interviewed by Heder. From their information it is possible to compile a picture of the treatment accorded those intellectuals and professionals who voluntarily returned after the communist victory. Their evidence is also useful for studying the policies of the DK regime, since they were a more privileged group than ordinary urban evacuees within Cambodia and were given a higher quality political education. The returnees came from all over the world - the largest number, 400, from France, many from the United States, and some from nearly every European country, the Soviet Union, China, Japan, and even a few from North Korea, including one who had spent about four years in Yugoslavia before studying for the same length of time in Pyongyang. Those in western countries all volunteered, but the ones in North Korea were ordered home, via China and Vietnam.

Many had always been authentic leftists, others were officials of the Lon Nol government who had been sent abroad for special training, some were non-political, and there was even a group of military

officers and non-commissioned officers who had been undergoing training in the United States.

Presumably all of the last were executed.331 Some of those who did not have leftist sympathies returned because of families left at home, and were not warned that they would not be able to rejoin them for an indefinite period, although they were told that in Cambodia they would be expected to live and work like simple peasants. Leftist intellectuals, who expected to be welcomed and employed in the new administration, were often told only that they would be used "according to competence and possibilities."332

If they left from Europe, where there were several hundred of them, they were divided into groups of thirty for the flight via Peking and usually had to purchase tickets themselves. On arrival in Phnom Penh they were met by an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then sent on to reception centers. Two of my informants recognized the foreign ministry official who met them as an old acquaintance, but in one case the latter made no sign of recognition, and in the second merely whispered into the ear of his old friend, “watch out!” In contrast to those coming from western countries, the ones arriving from North Korea were not subject to baggage inspection and the welcoming official even mentioned that there was no need of such a check for arrivals from that country.

Apparently all of them were first taken to one of two reception centers, the Khmero-Soviet Technical Institute on the road between the airport and the city, or to the former residential area of Boeung

Trabek in the southern suburbs. It would appear that the latter was a higher-level center for returnees who had leftist credentials or who had studied in socialist countries or served as GRUNK diplomats between 1970 and 1975. The rest went to the former technical institute, usually for about two months, and then were sent out to various work sites. In both places they were put to work at 'unpleasant' manual tasks - planting food, clearing swamps, preparing natural fertilizer - and at the same time were subject to political reeducation. At the technical institute the political work was often directed by Khieu Samphan himself, indicating the importance the regime, at least in the beginning, attached to these people, and in his absence the lectures were conducted by Phum,' brother of Keo Chanda, former Minister of Information and Industry in the present PRK government. One returnee also reported that in 1976 he studied with Ieng Sary.333 At Boeung Trabek, perhaps because the residents were considered to be better informed politically, educational work was conducted by lower-level cadre, and they did not meet any of the top leaders until 1978.

In contrast to evacuees within the country, they were allowed pencil and paper and were expected to take notes on the political lectures, but until 1978 were allowed no other reading material.334

After the two-month 'orientation course' at the Khmero-Soviet Technical Institute, there was a sort of 'graduation ceremony' presided over by the political instructors, and the returnees were sent out to various places to work. One man whose report is available was sent to an iron factory in Phnom Penh where there were 4-5 other

intellectuals like himself, 10 old factory workers as specialists, and 400 demobilized East Zone soldiers as ordinary workers. His true identity was supposed to be known only to the factory director, and the rest of the workers were told he was an ordinary person from the Southwest. Another graduate of the two-month course, about whom very few details are provided, spent some time working in Chruoy Sadau, Battambang.335

Other people were sent to the state model farm at Angkor Chey, about 25 km southeast of Phnom Penh, and run by the Minister of Agriculture, Non Suon, until his arrest in November 1976.

A former Lon Nol official, Seng Chen-An, was sent with his wife to the village of Talei, 15-20 km due south of the city.336 He wrote that the internees there were divided into three sections: civilians who had recently returned from abroad, a group of former urban intellectuals who had joined the revolutionaries in 1972-73, and the military personnel who had come back from the United States. There were about 60 in the second group and he recognized Nuon Khoeun, a well-known political writer who was later executed at Tuol Sleng, and Sisowath Dussady, member of one of the royal families.

Chen-An and his wife were moved about several times. After six months of field work at Talei, they returned to the technical institute for two more weeks of political education and were then taken with a group of 100 returnees to the state farm at Angkor Chey. The total work force was about 400, and the cadres included several former teachers who had joined the revolution before 1975. Every ten days

Non Suon conducted political education classes. In October they went back to Talei until January 1977, when they were sent to Stung Trang, a wartime communist headquarters in Damban 41.

There the returnees had to construct their own new village and grow their own food. This lasted until September 1978, when they were taken to Boeung Trabek just at a time when living conditions there were being relaxed.337

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In general the treatment of the returnees was comparable to the situation of new people in some of the better areas of the country.

Their food was always sufficient to prevent starvation, and their work, although arduous manual labor, was not beyond endurance. In contrast to what is alleged by most of the internal evacuees, they did not have to worry about keeping their identities secret - they were known precisely and in detail to everyone concerned.338 Although physical brutality on the job and in daily life does not seem to have been an ever-present threat, there were more executions - for escape, criticism, refusal to work, or for arbitrary, unexplained reasons - than in the best parts of Damban 3, for example. According to two men who spent the entire time in Boeung Trabek, the main danger came from those returnees who had been appointed as group leaders and

who tried to curry favor with the higher cadres by reporting, or inventing, faults of the other inmates, leading apparently to several executions. As many other refugees report, such vengeful denunciation was a problem throughout Democratic Kampuchea, and was one of the bad habits carried over from the pre-revolutionary society.

If the story of Seng Chen-An is typical, and of that we cannot be sure, returned Lon Nol civilian officials were in no more danger than the leftists who started out sympathetic to the new regime. His story even has a happy ending. In 1979, after eluding the DK evacuation, he eventually found his entire family, including the four children he had left behind in 1974, alive and in good health, although he did not indicate where they had lived during the preceding four years.

In spite of their known sympathies for the revolution and their voluntary repatriation, few of the intellectuals were ever given the chance to serve the new regime, and then not until 1978 when, apparently in view of the approaching war with Vietnam, there was a general amnesty of class enemies, base and new people were declared equal, and a few specialists were finally given tasks commensurate with their skills.339

One of the chosen was Thiounn Mum, the oldest of the overseas communists, a graduate of France's Ecole Polytechnique, Minister of Finance in RGNUC, and today one of the prominent DK personalities, who recalls that for some time after his return to Cambodia in 1975 he was put to work taking care of a farm of sick pigs. Another was

his brother Thiounn Chhum, also an important DK figure today, who was caught in the evacuation of Phnom Penh and spent three years working in the fields before being called to help in the new administration.340 For those not yet chosen, life changed significantly at Boeung Trabek.

Food improved both in quality and quantity, and reading material was provided. Ieng Sary visited them several times, alleging that he hadn't realized how badly the intellectuals had been treated, and he said that Cambodia needed them.341 In October 1978 there was a seminar on the development of a new education system including a university, in which the intellectuals would be employed. Pol Pot himself spoke and made a good impression on some of his audience, most of whom, however, had been too disillusioned by their experiences to respond.342 There were no further developments along that line, for the government was increasingly preoccupied with the coming war, and in January 1979 the returnees at Boeung Trabek were evacuated along with the DK administration.

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## Medicine in Democratic Kampuchea

In the story of his wanderings throughout 1979, Seng Chen-An describes how both he and his wife were on different occasions

forced to spend time in hospitals for treatment; and the treatment must have been fairly competent since their illnesses appear to have been serious. This would indicate that a certain amount of decent medical care was left behind from the DK system, or that the Salvation Front regime very quickly established new medical centers from scratch. Seng Chen-An, if pressed, would probably not wish to subscribe to either of these views, since the purpose of his report was to make both regimes look bad. Nevertheless, he and his wife were ill and were treated effectively, not just in Phnom Penh, but in the relatively backward province of Kompong Thom as well.

As I indicated earlier, one of the first removed in the STV is the point at which the informant says, "then I got sick and had to go to the hospital, … " a statement bound to startle the outsider nurtured on the line that medicine was abolished and doctors hunted down for extermination. A number of doctors were killed, and their deaths seriously discredit the DK regime since they could not all have been CIA agents or Vietnamese spies. One Tuol Sleng execution list contains the names of 21 civilian and military doctors, and it is not complete, since other names, such as Dr. Tan Meng Huot, are known to refugees.343 As I also noted above, a number of refugees, particularly from the Southwest and East, remember doctors whose identities were known but who survived; and in this connection it is interesting that of the 21 names on the list, 11 were arrested in Battambang, where the treatment of urbanites, especially in 1977, was particularly severe. Two others, both prominent in prewar Phnom Penh and one a military doctor, were taken from Damban 22; and two military doctors on the list were picked up in Damban 25.

Even through the distorting lens of the B/P account, we saw an emergency hospital maintained during the evacuation of Phnom Penh, and hospitals in Battambang where conditions were no worse than in Phnom Penh during the last months of the war. I also cited the case of a high school girl trained as a paramedic in Battambang.344 As instructors in her course there were seven doctors from the old society, thus people whose identities were known to the new authorities. She remembered the names of three. One still worked in Battambang in 1980 (although it is unlikely that he worked as a doctor throughout 1975-79); but the other two, Khim Kim San and Ping Kim Sea, appear on the Tuol Sleng execution list. Their arrests, however, were nearly a year apart, in October 1976 and July 1977, which together with the survival of their colleague indicates that whatever the reason for their deaths, it was not any general witch-hunt for doctors.

Construction of medical premises, as opposed to supplies of medicine and doctors, may have come closer to meeting needs. While travelling north-ward from Battambang through Mongkolborei in August 1981, I noticed an attractive, well-constructed wooden building which appeared to be quite new and which showed certain features of design distinguishing it from pre-revolutionary public wooden structures. The sign over the door said “District Hospital.” I asked a local official travelling with us about it and he told us, with some embarrassment, that it was a hospital dating from the DK years, but added that it had only been used for “them,” by which he meant the cadres or base peasants favored by the regime.

The girl who was trained as a paramedic went on to work for 26 months until she was transferred to field work. Eventually supplies of good modern medicine ran out, but during the month or two it lasted, it was given to anyone in need without prejudice as to previous position or class background. Although medical conditions obviously deteriorated, the reason was lack of supplies rather than vindictive policy.

The medical situation in Battambang, as with much else in the North-west, may have been atypical, both with respect to relatively benign conditions in 1975 and a violent reaction later, but since the zone cadres had good revolutionary backgrounds, their initial policies, even if later disavowed, must in 1975 have been acceptable interpretations of the policy guidelines handed down from the center. From the Tuol Sleng dossiers of Dr. Khim Kim San and Khek Ben, we now know that in the Northwest the policy was to keep at least some old society doctors in medical work, and that some of those doctors were later arrested and killed as part of the generalized purge against the Northwest administration.

Thus Khim Kim San, according to the record in his confession, was evacuated from Battambang for one month, then called back by Khek Ben to work in Hospital No. 304 of Damban 4. Then in April 1977 the authorities sent him back to work in the fields, and in July 1977 he was arrested and executed. Khek Ben himself also ‘admitted’ making use of former officials and teachers as well as doctors, something we have already seen in refugees’ reminiscences. Similarly, Dr. B.K.,

whose own experience in Damban 7 was noted above, told me that an acquaintance, Dr. Su Suy, had been employed by the local DK authorities in a hospital in Pursat town until 1977 or 1978, when he disappeared.

Even Pin Yathay, in his story from the worst part of the country, mentions the existence of hospitals, apparently in nearly every village.

Medicine was, however, entirely traditional, the personnel were all newly trained paramedics with little previous education; and, worst of all, the patients, already suffering from hunger, were put on the short rations of non-workers.345 Although the defects were real, and serious, the important point for the present study is that policy called for the organization of hospitals throughout the country and the admission to them of people who were sick, even if it only meant they were given a place to rest. That policy was also apparently followed, for none of the refugees I spoke to ever asserted that when sick they were refused permission to go for care. Their complaint is that the care available was very inferior to what they would have received in the towns in better times. The DK medical centers also appear to have had some independence vis-a-vis the political authorities. One man from Kompong Chhnang (Damban 31, a bad part of the West) related that while in the hospital with a genuine complaint, an order went out to arrest and execute him, but the doctor saved his life by refusing to declare him well and able to leave, saying to the political cadres, "my job is to care for sick people, and until I decide he is well you can’t have him."346

Another instance of a hospital used as refuge, but in reversed circumstances, was reported by Siv, a well-educated girl who had lived in Kandieng, Damban 7. While in the Pursat hospital in 1977 she made the acquaintance of a local cadre, a real murderer, who was feigning illness in order to hide in the hospital from the new Southwestern replacements.347

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Siv's hospital experience was interesting in other ways. It was the zone hospital, and she had gone there with intestinal trouble. There were two men who seemed to be real doctors, and 8 other personnel in a ward of 14 patients. She spent 17 days there and considered the food acceptable and conditions otherwise "not bad." She had also heard that in the damban hospital in Kandieng there was one real M.D. At zone level the hospital had modern medicine imported from China, but in its use base people were favored over new evacuees, Nevertheless Siv had no complaint about her own treatment, and one of her friends underwent a successful abdominal operation.

A young man from the same damban who had spent two months in a cooperative-level medical center with a swollen knee said the entire staff of 10 were base peasants who had received elementary on-the-job training, and medicine was mostly traditional. In addition

to such remedies he also received two shots of vitamin B-1 and two quinine pills. Living conditions were the same as outside, but of course there was no work.

In some of the most backwoods areas, medical care may have actually improved. In the far north of Damban 103, barely touched by civilization before the war, the Moslem schoolteacher whose story I have cited above said that hospitals were established at each administrative level - village, cooperative, damban, zone. The buildings were made of split and woven bamboo, “much like those of the KID hospitals.” At first medicine was mostly traditional, but then they also received modern medicines from China, including quinine, which was very important in that malarial area. In his opinion some real effort was made to establish and gradually improve medical facilities.348 In a positive vein, he mentioned in particular that women could choose to have babies at home or in a hospital (he obviously hadn’t heard that all women were supposed to have become sterile), were given one month off work following the birth and easy work before. Then, when it was time for them to return to work, old ladies went out to care for the children near the mothers’ work sites in order to facilitate nursing.

The above information, plus the fact that almost every refugee reports some hospital experience, is sufficient to show that DK medical policy was not to destroy medicine or to exterminate doctors but to develop a new medical system and to extend its area of operation beyond what had existed before.

Whether they went about it in the right way is another matter, and in the final analysis we may have to judge that they failed and that much of the failure could have been avoided. The desire for self-sufficiency in medicine was exaggerated, and cutting the rations of people on entry to the hospital certainly seems counterproductive. It was also absurd to refuse to make use of the services of those doctors who remained in the country after 1975, although it must again be emphasized that such refusal was not policy as understood by some top DK officials. Even had DK made the most efficient use of everything available, though, what was left at the end of the war was grossly inadequate.

Most hospitals outside Phnom Penh and Battambang had been destroyed, many of those left were unfit for use, there may have been no more than 200-250 doctors left in the country,349 and medicine was in short supply, all of which means that whatever the policy, most of the population would have been forced to rely on the type of basic medicine supplied by the DK authorities. The difference between DK policy and what the urban evacuees would have considered normal is that the limited supplies of good medicine were not concentrated in the towns for the use of those who could afford them, but instead the latter were forced to accept the type of treatment which would have been available to poor peasants.

If DK medical policy achieved less than it should have, it was probably not for lack of thought nor of talent at the topmost levels. A number of qualified doctors had joined the revolutionaries before 1975, the most famous being Thiounn Thioeun, their Minister of

Health, formerly with the Khmero-Soviet Hospital in Phnom Penh. During the war he was active in training new medical personnel under field conditions and in setting up facilities for those wounded in battle; and there is evidence that those programs were rather successful.

A young man from the base peasantry who spent the entire war and postwar periods in Damban 15, where Dr. Thiounn Thioeun worked before 1975, reported that in the region hospital there were both real modern doctors and others trained under field conditions and that during the war they were kept busy with wounded brought in from the front by a system of stretcher relays. Modern medicines, either captured or sent by agents from Phnom Penh, were generally used for battle casualties; but among civilians about 90% of the medicine was traditional, both because it was preferred by villagers and because it was necessary to conserve modern medicine for the wounded. The same informant also said that after the war, use of traditional medicine was increased; and the reason was obviously for lack of any other kind.350

The assertion that villagers preferred traditional medicine is not just propaganda, as some readers might think. Cambodian peasants were used to a wide variety of herbal concoctions, in which they had great faith, and although they accepted some modern treatments readily enough, they preferred to have them administered by the traditional practitioners or other roving quacks who would come to the house and give dubious injections from even more dubious needles. Ponchaud's informants were struck by the numbers of

abscesses resulting from the unsanitary injections of the DK medical workers,351 but I was equally impressed by the same thing among my students and their families in Kompong Thom in 1960-62.

Self-reliance in medicine, as in most other areas, was one of the bases of DK policy, and it may have been pushed to an absurd extreme; but it had roots in the Cambodian past, and it has had a few notable successes.

Backwoods villagers prefer traditional medicine, and some useful medical products can be manufactured locally. Coconut milk, for example, taken sterile from the fruit, is a usable intravenous serum.352 Moreover, several foreign observers have visited the DK fortified base near Phnom Malai since early 1980 and have been impressed by the medical services there, staffed mainly by people who have received their entire training under wartime and postwar Cambodian conditions. A German doctor told me of witnessing a rather difficult abdominal operation performed competently by a field-trained doctor; and he considered that the medical care there was good.

Of course that German doctor, and the other western health workers who have visited Phnom Malai, are specialists in emergency medical organization, which is what the DK authorities were engaged in throughout their three-and-a-half years in power. Moreover, these western specialists show by their own examples that there was a good bit of rationality in the DK system.

At Khao I Dang and the other Khmer refugee camps, the doctor-patient ratio and the supply of medicines, because of the intense international aid efforts, may be among the best in the world, yet most of the foreign medical teams have organized their own programs for training paramedics, technicians, and nurses, teaching them to do in a few days or weeks what would take months or years under normal circumstances in developed countries. The goal of these emergency training programs is also self-reliance, to enable the Cambodians, as much as possible, to care for themselves once the artificial foreign aid effort has ended, as one day it must. There has also been an enthusiastic growth of traditional medicine within the Khao I Dang and Sakeo camps, supported by the refugees - even many urban people - who feel comfortable with it, and encouraged by many of the foreign personnel who feel that it has real value in the treatment of some conditions, and at least may serve as a psychological prop in the depressing conditions of camp life.

Not surprisingly, the Cambodian doctors within the camps did not approve of giving support to the traditional practitioners, although they willingly tolerated and engaged in the other old tradition - that of the itinerant injection specialist going from house to house, charging for services that were supposed to be free, and prescribing or administering medicines unauthorized by the health authorities. It was also noteworthy that many of the urban refugees who preferred western medicine, and who complained of the lack of proper hospitals during 1975-79, disliked going to the KID hospitals because the medicines used were not the very same French commercial brands they had known before, or because they were sometimes told

that treatment they wanted was unnecessary, if not dangerous. They much preferred the black market medics whom the KID medical staff was trying to wipe out.353

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As a general conclusion on DK medicine, then, we must accept that as a system it was appropriate to the emergency conditions which prevailed, and probably gave the poorest peasants better care than they had known before, but that progress was artificially delayed by an obtuse refusal to make use of all available facilities, in particular trained personnel. Although some of the city doctors might have objected at first to working under the primitive conditions imposed by the emergency, most would not, and even the most recalcitrant would have preferred basic hospital work to planting rice.

The DK general theory, then, that there should be no privileged professions, and that everyone should first learn to live like poor peasants, delayed the full development of health care and undoubtedly caused the death of many people who could otherwise have been saved. Nevertheless, it is clear from reports out of Cambodia in 1979, including those filed by journalists on starvation and lack of medicine in Phnom Penh in the early months of that year, that the DK probably left as much to build on as had been left by the United States and Lon Nol in 1975.

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## Education

The DK record on education is much more straightforward. They did indeed abolish all literary schooling above the lowest primary grades, and did not even begin to discuss its reorganization outside the innermost circles of top cadres until late in 1978, when their sincerity is suspect. At that time they seem to have been searching for various ploys to attract the loyalty of intellectuals in the anti-Vietnamese resistance.

At the basic primary level, however, the STV about total destruction of education needs a good bit of modification.

The stated policy of the DK leaders was first “to eradicate illiteracy,” although schooling was to be conducted “in factories and cooperatives” and was to remain close to the realities of an agricultural country. In principle, “pupils study 2-3 hours a day and gain experience at manual work at the same time,” while "we have not yet reorganized higher education, apart from medicine … taught in the city hospitals and in the cooperative infirmaries."354 Refugee accounts confirm that such a program was indeed followed, at least in the better-run areas.

I have already referred to the case of a woman teacher who was put to work teaching small children in Damban 3 until the Southwest cadres arrived in 1977. From another part of Damban 3 a teenage girl who had worked in a mobile youth brigade said that schools for children 6-7 years old had existed in every cooperative there, and she had also seen some in Damban 1. The teachers, she believed, were mostly real schoolteachers who had joined the revolution before 1975; and she said that other teachers were not in danger if they adopted a proper revolutionary attitude. It was obvious that this girl was from a poor family, and she said the reason most refugees in KID denied the existence of any schools was because they refused to accept anything the DK regime had done. She realized, however, that in places where life was very difficult, there was little learning, even when schools formally existed.

Some of my old friends from Damban 4 also admitted that there had been centers for the indoctrination of primary school-age children, but they refused to qualify them as ‘schools,’ and claimed that the children learned nothing. Their own children refused to remain in them, kept running home to their families, and were eventually ignored by the cadres.

My informant from Kratie, H.N, saw primary schools in operation in all three places where he had worked, but those districts had been good in other respects as well.

We should infer, it seems, that central DK policy called for the establishment of primary classes for basic literacy and numeracy in all cooperatives, if not all villages, but that .where living conditions were very bad, or where local cadres distorted the policy, such schools may never have been organized. One place where the central policy seems to have been best.applied was in the East before the troubles of 1978. There, or at least in the best-run districts, children of primary school age attended classes in the mornings and performed productive work in the afternoons. The teachers were all from the base population, and there were DK textbooks for the guidance of the teachers .- not for distribution to the children - in reading, arithmetic and geography.353 My informants said that the achievements of the children in those schools were very low, which was no doubt true. Another interesting detail was that the school children received extra food rations and favored treatment from the authorities.356

The circumstances under which I obtained these details also merit attention. My informants were teachers in the KID school system whom I had been meeting regularly for over three months without eliciting any reports on the existence of DK schools. Then one day in September 1980 I asked them to describe what they had observed during the East Zone struggle and purge of 1978. They told me of So Phim’s announcement, the arrival of the central government troops, the flight or arrest of the East Zone cadres, and the rounding up of many ordinary people for forcible evacuation to other zones. The latter, it was announced, were traitors, and the people left in place were warned not to talk to them or give them anything pending their

departure. My informant continued, “it was right at noon, and the children were just getting out of school and had received their extra food; they were the only ones who dared to offer food and drink to the ‘traitors’ lined up waiting for departure.” It was only after that inadvertent remark that I was able to get specific information about schools.

Besides the basic primary schooling which was DK policy in principle, there were various technical courses to train skilled workers for the factories and machine shops. It seems that only young people from poor base peasant families were chosen for these courses, and their efficacy cannot be assessed from available information. A former university student who had been with the communists since 1970 and who from 1976-79 was in charge of a basic technical school in Phnom Penh did not think that his school had been very successful.357

It is fair to say that education in Democratic Kampuchea was at a virtual standstill, and that whatever central policy may have been, most local cadres considered higher education as useless and people who had obtained it less reliable than the uneducated. As already noted, in one of the better districts of the Southwest, people were not killed for being educated, but they might very well be killed for words or actions interpreted as boasting of their education. Even in the Boeung Trabek center for voluntary returnees, where all were intellectuals, it was considered very bad form to allude to any special knowledge. If, for example, an electric fixture needed repair, it was very dangerous to say, “I can fix it; I’m an engineer.” It was also

dangerous to do nothing, for then one was concealing knowledge and withholding aid from the organization. The proper mien was to tread a very fine line between ignorance and reluctant admission of a very small amount of skill, preferably acquired through practical work, and just sufficient for the task.358

A glimpse of what DK leaders had in mind for the eventual development of education came through in Pol Pot's speech at Boeung Trabek in October 1978. He considered that in 10 years, students with no previous schooling should be able to go from illiteracy to graduate engineers through study of only the important things and plenty of practical work. As students in such programs the children of poor peasants, with the proper revolutionary heritage, would be given preference. Another group of favored pupils were the children of the DK central leadership, who attended a special school near the Boeung Trabek center. Ieng Sary's children were believed to be there as well as the six-year-old [1978] son of Khieu Samphan.359

There was thus certainly no plan to restore anything like the prewar school system. Of course, the prewar system was admittedly inapt for Cambodian conditions and produced thousands of graduates unfit to be anything but functionaries; and even in the non-communist West many people are convinced of the irrelevance of much of the standard school systems. Democratic Kampuchea, however, is the only state to have downgraded education as such, and its solution must be rejected and attributed to an excess of romantic peasantism.

It is nevertheless essential to emphasize that DK policy was not the systematic destruction of all intellectual paraphernalia. Several refugees who had reached Phnom Penh soon after January 7, 1979 reported that libraries were still intact; and it is clear that much damage was then done by the anarchic behavior of the first people who thronged into the city. They looted books and papers to sell in the newly burgeoning markets or to wrap other goods. This may have been what happened even in the National Library which received so much attention in the world press. If destruction there had been a systematic DK effort, they would certainly not have overlooked the archives, which still remain and which are damaging to their version of Cambodian revolutionary history.360

In spite of occasional rumors to the contrary, the National Museum with its unique collection of Angkorean art survived virtually intact, as I was able to ascertain during a visit in August 1981. A few minor implements were missing, and one important statue had lost an arm, but everything else was as I had last seen it in 1972.

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The family

At one point in his narrative, at the time of his arrival in Leach, Damban 6, in September 1975, Pin Yathay remarks that all of his

numerous extended family still lived within easy visiting distance, and that "the family … had not yet [my emphasis] become the target … of the Khmer Rouge."361

One theme of early anti-DK propaganda was ‘destruction of the family,’ and it is still an integral part of the STV, albeit one which generally requires leading questions to elicit, since few refugees had experiences from which a policy of family destruction can be inferred. Thus, in an interview in Damban 25 in 1980, in answer to a question a man said, “yes, children were taken from parents; don’t know when [my emphasis] .” Then another person interjected, “1977”; and the first responded, “maybe.” Certainly nothing may be inferred from that kind of evidence.362 Khao I Dang, the largest refugee camp in 1980-81, was generally inhabited by family groups, and most families had remained together throughout the DK years. Of course some families were separated, even irrevocably, through incidents which occurred during the evacuation of Phnom Penh or in subsequent movement about the country. It would also be possible to discover cases of children torn from their parents, spouses capriciously separated, possibly even forced marriages. They would be, however, exceptions, the results of accidents, careless organization accompanied by lack of compassion or arbitrariness of individual cadres.

The experiences related by the refugee community as a whole plus the objective evidence of their preserved family circumstances demonstrate that none of those things was DK policy.

At worst it might be said that DK policy was neutral toward the family, yet even that would be inaccurate. One of their goals, even if only for chauvinistic reasons, was an increase in population,363 and since sexual relations outside marriage were prohibited by one of the strictest regulations of all, it is obvious that policy was to encourage the formation and maintenance of at least nuclear family units of husband, wife, and children. Two examples of how that policy worked in its provision of easier living conditions for married than for single women have been presented above;364 and in this the DK policy maintained, much more strictly than in prewar society, the official morality of ordinary Cambodian culture. Sexual relations between unmarried couples had always been contrary to proper behavior, early marriage encouraged, and the unmarried subject to some amount of disapprobation, although violations of the rules rarely occasioned any kind of physical violence.

Marriages in DK could be contracted only after securing the permission of the authorities, and one of the criteria for permission to marry was that the couple should be of the same political class. That is, Full Rights people should not marry Depositees;365 and among the intellectual returnees at Boeung Trabek, where they were divided into three categories according to their level of perceived political education, only those of the same level could marry.

Since the rules prohibiting extramarital sexual relations and limiting marriages to people of the same social category were so strictly applied, there would seem a priori to have been little scope for the alleged forced marriages between revolutionary soldiers and

evacuee women.366 The DK authorities took their moral code very seriously, and refugees generally agree that the code was applied even more strictly to cadres than to new people. In fact the DK moralists might well have worried that a union between one of their soldiers and a daughter of the bourgeoisie would demoralize the former;367 and as we have seen, even in Tuol Sleng, guards who as part of their work might torture women prisoners would themselves be executed if they engaged in off-duty sexual abuse. Neither do allegations of such marriages figure importantly in the stories of the refugees. In only one instance among the former DK residents I have met was such a story offered voluntarily, and it proved to be false, although if asked, “were there forced marriages?” many people might answer, “yes, it happened,” even if they had no certain knowledge of it themselves. Much more typical of relations between cadres and ‘new’ women was the situation described by Tay; and it might be safe to assert that women were in less danger of sexual molestation than at any time before 1975, which is not to claim that their situation, even as women, had improved.368

Similar restrictions were also part of traditional society. Young people did not normally marry without parental permission - in fact, most marriages were arranged by parents - and marriage, as distinct from concubinage, was rarely across class lines. Here, as everywhere, DK policy was immeasurably stricter than the pre-revolutionary norms it mirrored, and it served to modify, not destroy, the family through transferring parental authority over adults to the state and breaking down the extended family into nuclear units.

The latter was the DK family ideal, and destruction of large extended families as cohesive groups probably was an element of deliberate policy. Where new villages were constructed, houses were too small for more than parents and children, so that even if a large extended family lived close together, as in Yathay's case, they were forced to divide themselves into nuclear units.

Perhaps that is all refugees mean when they speak of destruction of the family, but we must be certain to understand what they mean, place it in proper context, and avoid interpretations based on what 'destruction of the family' would mean in the West. For instance a schoolteacher with university education, when asked about the deleterious effect of the DK system on family life, emphasized that children had become impolite and no longer observed the proper deference patterns.369

Cambodian families in prewar times, at least in the countryside, were rather loosely structured with few applicable sanctions for people who chose to break the rules. Most families in rural villages were nuclear, with a few three-generation families interspersed where old parents continued to live with one of their grown children. More extended families occurred where wealth accumulated, particularly-in urban areas.

Marriages were normally arranged, with the girl in particular having much less real than theoretical choice in rejecting a suitor proposed by her parents. I remember an old man in Baray, Kompong Thom

province, explaining to me that of course girls were free to refuse, but no proper daughter would want to go counter to her father’s wishes.

Premarital chastity of girls was expected, but since most of them married soon after puberty it was not onerous. It was not essential for men, but there was little opportunity for extramarital sex in the villages, and many peasant men probably went through life with no sexual partners other than their spouses. For urban men, however, extreme sexual promiscuity, mostly with prostitutes, was the norm.

In spite of those restrictions, it was recognized that women had an absolute right to terminate a marriage, and the chances of remarrying for a divorcee or widow depended almost entirely on her personal attractiveness, decorum, and wealth. The fact of having a previous husband was of little importance.370

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The place of women was definitely considered to be in the home and, for peasant women, in the fields; and formal schooling for them had not traditionally been considered necessary. At most, basic literacy was seen as desirable; and as late as the 1960s few girls outside of Phnom Penh persisted beyond the first six years of primary school. In fact many got married soon after that, and in Kompong Thom at

that time I not infrequently heard male students and teachers remark that too much schooling tended to turn girls into removed.

The ideal family situation was deteriorating quite rapidly in the ten years before the outbreak of war in 1970, and the deterioration became much more rapid in 1970-75. There were several reasons.

As the bureaucracy, in particular the school system, expanded after independence, there was an increase in respectable employment outside the home; and women who became teachers or civil servants were financially independent and could insist on marriage partners of their own choice. As Phnom Penh grew, there was also more employment for women in shops, and eventually factories, with the same effect. Often, perhaps usually, such girls gave some of their earnings to their families, thereby demonstrating the utility of female education; and urban men who a generation earlier would have insisted on an illiterate homebody saw the advantage in their new lifestyle as officials or businessmen of a sophisticated wife who could be presentable at dinner parties or during travel abroad.

Since Cambodian marital customs had been based on general acceptance of tradition, rather than physical sanctions, increasing numbers of women began to demand, and simply take, social and even sexual equality. In the eyes of traditionalists the old adage seemed often to be proven correct - too much education did turn women into removed.371

By 1970 it was no longer unusual for a perfectly respectable girl to insist on choosing her own husband, even running away temporarily if necessary, and to refuse to have the marriage registered in order to be able to divorce more easily if things should turn out badly. Urban matrons, with surprising frequency, were beginning to think of repaying husbands' infidelities in kind; and even though most young middle-class women still considered monogamy their ideal, few of them held any prejudice against their sisters who made other choices.372

Thus traditional morality and the traditional family were changing rapidly, and for those who disapproved of the changes they were breaking down. The DK authorities restored traditional morality, but with a vengeance; and the peasant cadres who administered the rules probably believed they were saving the Cambodian family from urban corruption. Men and women were made officially equal, but both lost the freedom of choice in courtship and marriage which women to a large extent had recently gained.

Concubinage and polygamy were forbidden, but those customs had affected few people anyway. Prostitution was ended and girls could no longer be seduced. Even marital quarreling was forbidden, no doubt with the laudable aim of enforcing domestic tranquility, but like so much else in DK, it could be treated as a capital crime.373 DK policy was not directed toward destruction of the family, but family relationships were subject to the same suffocating authority as all other aspects of life.

What the DK regime wished to discourage was not the family in the sense of husband, wife, and children, but family-ism and the resultant nepotism which pervaded much of the pre-1975 administration. Thus parents were no longer allowed authority over grown children, and family connections were of no value in securing favorable living conditions.

Pin Yathay was shocked that the two highest-ranking women in the DK government did not help their niece, an evacuee; but most of the top DK personalities had immediate family members who were shown no favor and spent 1975-79 as ordinary base peasants or evacuees. For them it was probably a matter of principle, to demonstrate their commitment to the ideal of equality and to emphasize that the ascriptive criteria for advancement in old Cambodia were no longer applicable.374

The situation of children, like everything else in DK, differed from place to place, but it is impossible to infer that it was ever policy to separate children from their parents. In the published collection of refugee children's drawings cited earlier, brief comments about their lives were elicited from the 25 young artists. Twelve of them said nothing that indicated their family situations, but among the other thirteen, nine had certainly or most probably never been separated from their families, three had only been separated in the DK retreat of 1979, and one made a comment which conveyed no information about his family but showed pleasant memories of DK - "all of us children used to eat in the kitchen. … . I like to remember those moments."375

That comment is reminiscent of the situation noted above about East Zone children who went to school and received extra rations, indicating a policy, although not everywhere carried out, of giving children special treatment. Children were expected to do productive work, although it should already be clear that children, as distinct from adolescents and young adults, were not systematically separated from their families. Whether in Pin Yathay's stories of the worst parts of Pursat or in the good areas of Damban 3, married women worked in the villages, old women took care of very small children while their parents worked, and children old enough to work were only absent from home during the day. There are reliable reports, offered voluntarily, of centers established for children, but it is uncertain whether they were meant as permanent separation or only during the daytime working hours. My informants from Damban 4 said their own children kept running back home and were ultimately ignored, which suggests the scheme was not being run very rigorously by the authorities. One report from Damban 25 contains the bare statement, "in 1978 children were put into centers, separated from parents," but that requires much more amplification before any inferences can be drawn.376 Teenagers, in contrast, who must be distinguished from children, left home to work in mobile brigades and might not see their families for weeks or months, but in peasant societies they are already considered adults, and in prewar times might have left home to work at some menial task in Phnom Penh.

The productive work to which children were put was the usual type of work in which peasant children had always engaged - gathering fruit, helping with the planting, or collecting manure for fertilizer. In the 1960s I observed that poor children often had to leave school for days at a time to help their parents in the planting or harvest season; and small children might be persuaded to gather manure with the story that if they packed elephant dung around the base of a fruit tree they would produce a baby elephant.377

Children's work in the old days though was accompanied by much fun and play, as the elephant dung story clearly indicates; and the suppression of fun and play is one of the things which distinguishes DK invidiously from pre-revolutionary Cambodia.

Among the comments accompanying the children's drawings was the account of a boy who had worked minding water buffalo, a typical children's chore in Cambodia. He told of being punished twice in one day, once for allowing the animal to run away, also typical, but once for laughing and joking while at work, which for Cambodia was entirely aberrant.

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## Religion

The constitution of Democratic Kampuchea stated that everyone had freedom of religion, or freedom not to hold any faith, but that reactionary religion was not permitted.378

In practice no religious activities were tolerated, and on this point the STV is true. The end of religious celebrations, however, did not mean spiritual deprivation for the entire Cambodian population. As described above, many of the ‘outer’ peasants had never experienced organized religion; and within central, mainstream Cambodia many people, both peasants and urban dwellers, had already become non-observant long before the war.

It is nevertheless important to give some attention to the details of the abolition of traditional religion. We must first realize that there had never been complete antagonism between monks and communists. During the war there were monks in communist zones and elsewhere who supported the revolution, just as there were monks in the towns who were ardent backers of Lon Nol; and since war itself is bad in Buddhist terms, it is no more legitimate as a monk to support one side than the other. In some districts, as we saw in the refugee accounts cited above, many low-level DK cadres were former monks or achars, and they often seemed to be among the most strict disciplinarians.

Cambodian communists no doubt held a special animus against Buddhism, which they saw as a prop for the traditional elites and an

organization which encouraged the development of ‘feudal’ attitudes and relationships.

At the end of the war in 1975 they nevertheless adopted a gradualist policy toward the monks. There were no mass executions of monks. Only a few of the highest-ranking, most outspoken supporters of the old regime were killed in 1975, and thereafter only those few who adamantly refused to comply with the new style of life. There was not even an immediate expulsion of all monks from their temples. What the new regime did insist on was that monks must no longer live on the labor of others - that is, they must not be fed by the credulous who believed they were storing up merit in the cosmic account books - but must work to produce their food like anyone else.

Simply putting monks to work at hard labor was nothing new. They had always, especially in small villages, pitched in to repair temples, sawing wood, mixing cement, etc., and in Sihanouk’s day they had been put to work in his ‘voluntary’ manual labor schemes for officials.379 Field work was a different matter, since in ploughing, planting, and harvesting, a certain amount of insect and small animal life was inevitably destroyed, which was considered a breach of the monastic rule against killing. Of course, fishing or hunting or gathering eggs were even less permissible for monks, since those tasks led directly to the taking of animal life. Not that monks refused to eat animal products. The meals served them by the faithful were always replete with tasty dishes of beef, pork, fish, and fowl; but they had not killed the animals, and had therefore committed no sin.

In the practice of Buddhism, as in other religions, casuistry knows no limits. What the communists did after 1975 was simply to tell the monks that henceforth they had to work like everyone else and could no longer teach or carry out any religious activity. They were not immediately forced to unfrock and were not always forced to immediately leave the temples. But gradually, as work involved more and more breaches of monastic rules, they discarded their robes and returned to lay peasant status.380 In Battambang monks could still be seen in 1976 and in Kratie well into 1977. Two informants were able to report in some detail on the way the gradualist policy was carried out. In Chhouk, Damban 35, there was a district committee of revolutionary monks favorable to the DK policy who held meetings to explain why monks should do productive work rather than live on the labor of others. This was presented in the form of a suggestion, not an order, and the monks were told to think it over and decide for themselves.

Eventually, of course, they realized they had no choice but to follow the official guidelines, and they gradually returned to lay life, after which the temples were turned into offices, meeting halls, and militia barracks. In that district my informant knew of no executions of monks or general destruction of religious images, and the single case of the latter which he observed seemed to have been a test to demonstrate freedom from superstition.381

Near Phnom Sampeou in Damban 3, a former Pali language teacher, who because of his close association with religious schools

particularly resented communist neglect of religion, also reported a gradualist policy. Monks there were first gathered together in certain temples while the rest were converted to other uses. For over a year there was no compulsion to defrock, although many did as difficulties in connection with labor tasks multiplied.

Finally there was an order requiring all to adopt lay dress and to leave the temples. In that district there were a few executions - two abbots in 1975 and two more monks who refused to obey the final order to defrock.382 For some lower-level cadres, and it seems in particular for those who had once followed a religious vocation as monks or achars, the rejection of Buddhism did not represent a change to non-religion ('atheism' is irrelevant since Buddhism in the strict sense is already atheistic), but a flight from an inferior faith to a superior one, resembling in the nature of the process the flight to Cao-Dai in the 1920s and the rejection of Buddhism in favor of evangelical Christianity at Khao I Dang.383

C.H., a Khmer of an evangelical Christian family whose background was known in his district of Damban 3, and who apparently discussed religion at some length with his cadres, told me that in a big meeting in 1977 a damban-level official had explained that Communism was a new 'religion' (sasana).384 Within his cooperative C.H. said that one of his cadres, a former achar, also explained Communism as a new sasana superior to the old. In that cadre's view Buddhism was particularly bad because it encouraged 'feudalism' and class distinctions. Christianity, he thought, was better. Its principles were close to those of Communism, but it had

no enforcement apparatus to insure compliance with its rules, and for Cambodia was unacceptable because of its foreign connections.

Another evangelical Christian at KID who had lived in Damban 42 also heard a khum-level cadre who was a former achar say that they were making the revolution according to a new sasana.

The above accounts are interesting not only in their direct evidence for the attitude of some revolutionaries toward religion, but in their indirect evidence that Christians were not systematically killed, as stated by Ponchaud, who wrote, "if the Khmer Rouge know a person is a Christian they take him away and kill him accusing him of belonging to the CIA."385

No doubt some Christians were killed because of their faith, but like most elements of the STV, this one also requires modifications with respect to time, place, and precise circumstances. Indeed the Christians I have cited here did not seem to think that their faith alone had endangered them much more under the DK regime than in earlier times. C.H., who believed he was respected by the communists because he worked hard and never lied (which he emphasized as due to his Christian training), told how his father had once been threatened with death by the Battambang issaraks in the 1940s because his Christianity was thought to give him sympathy for the French,386

Christian places of worship certainly suffered and the cathedral of Phnom Penh was razed in a clear act of spite, but as I noted

elsewhere, its role as symbol of a still blatant neo-colonial presence, so well delineated by Milton Osborne, meant that its destruction "may well have been viewed sympathetically by other than Khmer Rouge fanatics."387

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Much more important in prewar Cambodian society than Christians were the Chams, who were both a minority ethnic group and followers of another ‘foreign’ religion, Islam. They had been around for a very long time, though, and were accepted as Cambodians, if not really Khmer; their religion, albeit viewed as very strange, was somehow more indigenous than Christianity and not linked to the European colonialists or to any other threatening foreign source.

Many Chams claimed before the war that they were held in contempt by the Khmer and were objects of discrimination, and ill-feeling between those two sections of Cambodian society certainly existed in some localities.

Many Khmer regarded Chams with a mixture of awe and fear. They were believed to be accomplished in the black arts; and Phnom Penh ladies used to cross over to Chrui Changvar, a Cham community on a peninsula where the Mekong and Tonle Sap rivers meet, to get predictions about the future, love potions for husbands and lovers,

and noxious prescriptions for rivals. Ping Ling, on two occasions during the evacuation, rejected transportation on Cham river boats on the grounds that the boatmen would probably murder and rob their Khmer passengers. In his opinion, characteristic of the Phnom Penh bourgeoisie, the Chams “were a sect of people, most known for their cruelty,” hired killers, pirates, looters of damaged ships during the war, highway robbers, and despoilers of corpses of the drowned. I also heard such stories in Cambodia, in particular a persistent rumor that when a ferry capsized near Phnom Penh in the late 1960s with great loss of life, Chams from Chrui Changvar had robbed the corpses, even murdering survivors in the process.388

Since 1979 the STV has held that the Chams were as a group a special object of DK extermination policy and that few of them have survived. Those reports have exaggerated both the size of the prewar Cham population and, sometimes as a result, the numbers killed, and we need only note here that the number of survivors is unknown and will remain unknown until another census is taken; but the statements of Cham refugees in KID suggest that there was never a central policy to destroy them. In parts of the Center and East in particular, there were apparently massacres of Chams as such, but Chams from the Northwest and North assert that they were not the object of any special attention by the authorities and that they survived in the same proportion as other people. Only speculation is possible on the reasons for the difference. As I have noted, a good bit of evil was traditionally imputed to Chams, and the places where massacres have been reported were in the general area where Les Kasem’s murderous battalion operated during the war and may also

have held the largest concentration of the Cham 'bourgeoisie.'389 This last suggestion is extremely tentative and speculative, since virtually no ethnographic work was ever done on the Cambodian Chams and we know little or nothing about the peculiarities of their society or its inner divisions. Some Chams became revolutionaries,390 and one of my good informants from the East, where there had been many Chams, had heard of a whole district of revolutionary Chams in Kompong Chhnang (West, Damban 31). This would have been in the same general area where Shane Tarr and his wife reported meeting in 1975 pre-revolutionary Chams who resented the wealthier hajis of the Lon Nol camp.391

The Chams of course, like everyone else, were denied the right to practice their religion in Democratic Kampuchea, and no doubt their temples were converted to the same lay uses as Buddhist temples (there would have been no images to destroy, though); but one must think carefully about stories that they were forced to eat pork, since the general complaint of all refugees is that there was too little meat of any kind. It may have been true that Chams found themselves in places where pork was the only meat ever distributed at all, since it had always been the most commonly used meat in Cambodia,392 but that does not necessarily signify discrimination by the new authorities.

With respect to treatment of temple buildings and images, the reports of destruction put out in the media and reiterated by most refugees require considerable modification. During my visit to Cambodia in August-September 1981 I was able to observe that in

Phnom Penh, Battambang, and Siemreap nearly all important temples were still standing and had suffered little or no damage. It is perhaps significant that those three towns were little touched by the war of 1970-75, and if in fact temples in other provincial towns, such as Kompong Thom, Kompong Cham, Prey Veng, or Svay Rieng have been destroyed, it may well have been before 1975. The one exception in Battambang, Wat Sangker, was destroyed in 1979 during fighting between DK forces and the Vietnamese when explosives stored in it were detonated. It was im- possible to check the condition of the largest temple in Battambang, Wat Po Veal, since it is being used as a Vietnamese garrison; but the excellent condition of the White Elephant temple with its intricate decor belies the story given to Ponchaud that “they destroyed … the relics and ornaments” there.393

In Phnom Penh in 1981 I found empty lots where two. temples had stood, but some of the most important, Botum Vaddey, Ounalom, Lanka, Tuol Tapoung looked nearly as they had before 1975.394 Wat Lanka has a new main image, of vastly inferior style, indicating that the original was destroyed. Some temples, such as Saravan and Srah Chok, were still overgrown courtyards with their gates closed, having simply been ignored since 1975.

In Wat Phnom, on the hill in central Phnom Penh which gives the city its name, two minor images have been decapitated, but the unusual central image and the ornate decor were untouched. The principal damage suffered by some of these temples, such as Wat Lanka, as well as many other public buildings in Phnom Penh, is that wooden

doors and window frames have been removed, but that was done in 1979 by newly arrived squatters searching for firewood or material for construction.395

When I questioned residents of Battambang or Siemreap, they confirmed what my rapid tours around the towns seemed to indicate - that temples in those urban areas had not been seriously damaged. They offered the further opinion that most damage to temples had occurred in rural areas when entire villages were moved. Then all buildings, including temples, were torn down and material which could be reused was transported elsewhere; and in fact damaged and destroyed temples were much in evidence along the main roads through rural areas.

This suggests that such destruction as occurred was not just for the purpose of desecrating or eliminating mementoes of the old culture, but was a concomitant of the refashioning of the countryside, and because temples as such were no longer sacred. It is also worth noting that temples seem to have suffered most in places under control of low-level cadres straight out of the peasant milieu and were best preserved in those towns where regional, zonal, or central government officials were resident.396

The ancient temples of Angkor were also undamaged, and their intact state is directly contrary to stories current in KID in 1980. In particular, I was told by refugees that on the so-called “Giants’ Causeway,” the main entry to the walled city of Angkor, all the dozens of images had been decapitated. In fact there is no change from its

prewar condition; and as we can see from an unnoticed remark by one of the child artists in 1980, there was some effort by DK authorities to prevent deterioration of the Angkor edifices.397

## The human cost

Democratic Kampuchea has suffered almost universal condemnation because of the numbers of people who were executed or who died unnecessarily from hunger or illness. Such a judgment is valid, even though, as Chomsky and Herman demonstrated, it was made too soon and for the wrong reasons. It was also often made by the wrong people.

A news magazine which considers the killing of half a million people in Indonesia to be “the West’s best news for years in Asia” has no business adopting a high moral tone about DK; and those who are complacent about close U.S. ties to a country in which one-third of the youth (16 million persons) “are growing up in circumstances so deprived that they are unlikely ever to play a useful role in modern society” and which within 20 years “will be burdened with millions of adults so undernourished, unskilled and uneducated that they will be impervious to any kind of civilizing process” should be able to view Pol Pot’s DK with equanimity, unless they wished to argue explicitly that brutalities are legitimate when imposed on the lower orders, but become atrocities when the tables are turned.398

The Bangkok-based journalists who so eagerly purveyed stories of DK hardships would have been more credible if they had also noticed

that “many school children, especially in rural areas, were starved and suffering malnutrition” in Thailand, that perhaps even “eight per cent of Thai children have been under the malnutrition classification,” or that “the most dreadful problem is pervasive poverty in 37 provinces [over half.the country],” or that outside of Bangkok “one doctor serves between 30,000 and 50,000 people in rural areas,” a ratio approximating that prevailing in Cambodia at the end of the war in April 1975.399

The strictures against DK, whatever their factual validity, have rarely been set in a proper comparative context nor have they taken into account that the conditions in which the country was left in April 1975 would have meant large death tolls over normal, whatever regime came to power, not just from hunger and illness, but also from violence caused by the near total breakdown of ordered society. Democratic Kampuchea only deserves special blame to the extent that a ‘normal’ figure, if it could be determined, were exceeded.

I do not believe it is possible to determine with any precision the number of people who died of starvation, illness, or execution, but because of the attention directed to this aspect of DK, some discussion is unavoidable. There is no point in reviewing all of the various estimates of deaths or population decline which appeared during 1975-79, and which ranged from tens of thousands to the 3 million which appeared in the account of Dith Pran, a former associate of foreign journalists in Cambodia400 and which was also adopted as the view of the Vietnamese and the PRK government.

Most were nothing more than ad hoc extrapolations and subject to the imprecision of all such guesses. One attempt at statistical precision was made by the CIA, which claimed that by January 1979 the population had been reduced from over 7 million to 5.8 million. 401

The danger in relying on impressionistic estimates was demonstrated above with respect to Prey Chhor in Damban 41, where my informant offered an execution total several times larger than the entire population of the district, and the same thing was apparent in local estimates of the number of people killed in a district prison in Takeo province. A figure of 90,000 was alleged, but when Ben Kiernan acquired the prison records he found that the true total had been about 1,500. 402

The first problem in determining the degree of human destruction in DK is statistical, since almost all estimates depend on extrapolations from earlier figures. The only nationwide Cambodian census ever taken was in 1962, and it produced a total population figure of 5,740,000. Official statistics for subsequent years were nothing more than the 1962 figure compounded annually by an, estimated growth rate of 2.2 percent, giving about 6.8 million for 1970 and over 6.9 million for 1971. 403

More sophisticated tinkering with the data gave, for 1970, 6,993,000 or 7,143,000; and the most elaborate manipulation of the base figures produced seven different possible projections ranging, for 1970, from 7,029,000 to 7,524,000 and for 1975 from 7,864,000 to

8,768,000, on the assumption that normal peacetime conditions had prevailed. The author of these extrapolations seemed to prefer 7,363,000 for 1970.404

Thus when the war began in Cambodia in 1970 no one knew what the population was, there was a difference of over half a million between the official and the most reasonable expert estimates, and any figure could have been off by 2-300,000.

The war, it may safely be assumed, both altered the normal growth rate and took a high death toll of which there could be no accurate count, but which both sides have put at around half a million. Thus estimates for 1975 contain an even larger inherent margin of error.

In their report on Cambodian demography, the CIA used a figure of just over 7 million for 1970, which is as good a guess as any for our purposes, and 7.3 million by April 17, 1975, which means they accepted both a decrease in the rate of growth and a war loss of over 500,000.405 Of that 7.3 million, there were about 200,000 Vietnamese who were immediately repatriated to Vietnam, leaving 7.1 million Cambodians (including Chinese and Chams) for the starting DK population.

In an earlier publication on this subject I accepted some of the CIA premises, but modified the death rates in an ad hoc manner based on impressionistic differences among ‘good’ and ‘bad’ regions, and proposed a total population figure for early 1979 of 6.5 to 6.7 million, which I considered temerarious at the time, and probably too high

due to lacunae inherent in the CIA data. Nevertheless, by the end of 1980 the U.N. and FAO organizations were estimating the Cambodian population at 6 million, then 6.5 million.406 Their figures were also limited to population within Cambodia, excluding an estimated half million in the various border camps and refugee centers, which meant that Cambodian survivors from the DK period totalled 6.5 to 7 million; and if a 2.2 percent growth rate had prevailed throughout 1979-80 there would have been between 6.2 and 6.7 million survivors in early 1979, virtually the same as my own ad hoc extrapolations.

That would still represent a serious decline from a projection for 1979 (7,745,000) which assumed normal growth after the end of the war (the 7.1 million estimate for 1975 increased by 2.2 percent per year), and it is an absolute decline of at least 400,000 from the 1975 estimate. Of course all such conclusions depend on the base figure from which calculations are started, and the true figure could vary either way.

By mid-1981 the Cambodian government (PRK) was suggesting a total population figure of 6.8 million within the country, but admitted that it was only a projection.407 More precise statistics were the numbers of people registered in krom samakki (“solidarity groups”), a total of 6,353,690, which would comprise most of the rural working population. Since there were possibly 3-400,000 in the larger towns (Phnom Penh, Battambang) unregistered in solidarity groups and some unregistered in the countryside, a total population figure of 6.8 million is not unreasonable, and, including people who had fled the

country since early 1979, a figure of 7.1 living Cambodians could be postulated.

Assuming they had increased at 2.2 percent per annum since early 1979, the number of DK survivors at that date would have again been over 6.7 million; and if the rate of increase in 1979 was less, which seems likely, the total for early 1979 would have been even higher.

Thus accepting the CIA figure for 1975 and the latest population estimates, it is only possible to suggest that an absolute decrease of about 400,000 between 1975 and January 1979 is likely;408 and there are various ways to theoretically account for it. If, for example, as some people were saying in 1976, all Cambodian women were becoming sterile, the excess of deaths over births could perhaps be accounted for by a zero birth rate, and one would not have to postulate executions at all. In fact, given the normal prewar death rate of 18 per thousand, there would have been at least 511,200 natural deaths. Of course we know that such a projection of Cambodian birth rates was incorrect and that at least tens of thousands of executions did occur. The qualitative assessment of the population decline depends on the reasons for the excess of deaths over births; and this in turn depends on the birth rate.

In their report the CIA first estimated subjectively the number of deaths which would have occurred in each period, then took a birth rate which was initially based on apparently standard demographic considerations, and from there they calculated a crude death rate. Their crucial figure was the impressionistic estimate of total deaths,

which, because of the apparent surviving population, we now know to have been erroneous.409 Their birth rates, however, may be given consideration in the discussion, since for 1975 at least, they were based on standard demographic work.

The normal peacetime birth rate in Cambodia was believed to have been 46 per thousand,410 which if applied to the 7.1 million population of April 1975 for the 4 DK years would give an increase of 1,306,400 and would mean a crude estimate of deaths of 1,706,400 (births plus 400,000 decrease in total population).

Now everyone realizes that the crude birth rate must have declined from normal. The CIA estimates that for the least favored “new people,” slightly over half the population in 1975, the most likely birth rate was 32 per thousand in April to July 1975, declining to 15 per thousand for the rest of that year and to 10 per thousand for the remainder of the DK period.

For the more favored “old people” the corresponding rates were 43 per thousand, 30 per thousand for the last half of 1975 and first half of 1976, then a steady 28 per thousand. As I shall demonstrate, there is no point for my purposes in calculating the varying rates throughout the entire four years. In my critique of the CIA report, I suggested that in the better areas of the country, birth rates of old and new people could not have varied so much; and I shall take, for illustrative purposes, 30 per thousand as a crude average birth rate for the entire population over four years, giving an increase of 852,000. Since there was an absolute decline of 400,000, total

deaths would have been 1,252,000, of whom 511,200 would represent the normal peacetime death total, leaving 740,800 deaths in excess of normal and due to the special conditions of DK.

Subjective assessment of survivors' accounts indicates that over half would have resulted from hunger, exhaustion and illness, leaving, say, 300,000 to be attributed to executions. Obviously, if the CIA's lower birth rates for most of the country during most of the DK period were taken into account, as perhaps some of them should be, we would be left with a still lower execution estimate.

Given the lack of precision inherent in all the data and estimates, it is impossible to reach more accurate final totals, or to more precisely apportion the decrease among executions, deaths from illness and hunger, or failure to reproduce due to changed living circumstances. Some of the burial pits discovered provide the evidence that mass executions occurred, but there is as yet no way to count the number of executions separately from death due to other causes. Yathay pointed out that in Pursat in 1976-77 mass graves were for those who died of hunger and illness, while executions took place in isolation in the forest.411

Moreover, some of the 500,000 war victims are buried in mass graves, and without forensic tests it is probably impossible to determine whether death occurred before or after 1975. A decline of 400,000 does, I would say, indicate failure of the DK system, but some of the more extreme estimates of deaths from execution and hunger must be relegated to the realm of black propaganda. It is

simply impossible to take the generally accepted population figure for April 1975, the population alive today, demographically acceptable birth rates, and project an extermination figure of 1-2,000,000.

#### FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 3

1. Bangkok Post, "Blueprint for the Future," parts 1-6, February 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 1976.
2. Ibid., part 4.
3. Guy J. Pauker, Frank H. Golay, Cynthia H. Enloe, Diversity and Development in Southeast Asia, The Council on Foreign Relations (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977), pp. 33-36, 40.
4. St. Louis Post-Dispatch, November 29, 1979, and Christian Science Monitor, December 4, 1979; I wish to thank Ben Kiernan for this information. Instances of the vilification have been noted in chapter 2, note 79.
5. In the literature to date the Cambodian administrative terminology in English translation has not been stable. In Timothy Michael Carney, "Communist Party Power in Kampuchea (Cambodia)," the largest division, phumipheak (my 'zone') is called 'region,' and its divisions, damban, 'sectors.' Kenneth M. Quinn, "Political Change in Wartime: the Khmer Kraham Revolution in Southern Cambodia, 1970-74," used 'region' and 'area' respectively. Stephen R. Heder, Kampuchean Occupation and Resistance (cited as "Occupation"), pp. 14, 33, has 'zone' (phumipheak) and 'region' (damban), but on p. 64 uses 'region' for phumipheak; Heder, "From Pol Pot to Pen Sovan to

the Villages" (cited as "From Pol Pot"), p. 4, repeats Carney's usage of 'region' and 'sector'; but in Heder's translation of a list of Tuol Sleng prison victims we find 'region' (phumipheak) and 'zone' (damban). In view of this confusion I have simply adopted the terms which I prefer for quite arbitrary reasons, and which agree with Heder part of the time. In general I shall use the Khmer 'damban' in the text; and if I have not used 'phumipheak' in the same way, it is because I find it too awkward to be adopted as a technical term. Other areal terms than 'zone,' 'region,' 'damban,' such as 'area,' 'sector,' 'division,' will be used to indicate territory not coextensive with administrative units. I shall use 'Democratic Kampuchea' to designate the polity existing from April 17, 1975 to January 7, 1979. Pol Pot considered that DK was born on April 17, 1975 (FBIS, October 4, 1977) even though until the constitution was promulgated on January 5, 1976 the country was officially under the Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea headed by Prince Sihanouk. Throughout the DK period the government was commonly known as Angka ("organization"), not to be confused with 'Angkor,' the ancient capital site near the modern town of Siemreap.

6. No refugee I met ever referred to a zone by number; former DK cadres interviewed by Stephen Heder preferred the compass terms ("Heder Interviews"); and Non Suon, a central government official arrested in 1976, in his confessions also designated zones by their compass terms.

7. S. Heder, "From Pol Pot to Pen Sovan to the Villages," International Conference on Indochina and Problems of Security and Stability in Southeast Asia, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, June 19-21, 1980, p. 12; "Heder Interviews," p. 13; Non Suon Confessions.

8. Information provided by Ben Kiernan.
9. All information about this zone is lacking in precision due to scarcity of sources.
10. See Map 1, which I first obtained from Stephen Heder, from a photograph taken by Timothy M. Carney. The original is in the former Tuol Sleng prison in Phnom Penh.
11. Ben Kiernan, "The Samlaut Rebellion and its Aftermath, 1967-70; the Origins of Cambodia's Liberation Movement," Parts I and II, Working Papers Nos. 4 and 5, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, n.d. [1975-76].
12. See Map 1; also information from interview with S.F. - see below, page 129.
13. There is imprecision on this point in refugee accounts, but they generally treated khum and cooperative as equivalents. Likewise Pol Pot, in his speech of September 27, 1977, claimed that most cooperatives were then of khum size, with only a few phum cooperatives still left. For some details of cooperative administration, see Chandler with Kiernan and Muy Hong Lim, "The Early Phases of Liberation in Northwestern Cambodia: Conversations with Peang Sophi" (cited further as "Peang Sophi").
14. Above, p. 54; Barron and Paul, pp. 172-175.
15. ICP - Indochina Communist Party; Issarak, "free," refers to armed bands who fought against the French between 1946 and 1954, generally to those who were politically non-communist; Pracheachon was a legal political party which represented the Cambodian communists between 1955 and 1962. See further below, chapter 4.

16. At least in 1980 Stephen Heder, who had interviewed more DK people than anyone else, said he still had many gaps to fill. For further progress see Timothy Carney, "The Organization of Power in Democratic Kampuchea."
17. See Kiernan, "Samlaut."
18. "Heder Interviews," p. 21.
19. Heder, "From Pol Pot," pp. 7-9; Ben Kiernan, "Conflict in the Kampuchean Communist Movement" (Kiernan, "Conflict"), p. 51.
20. Interview, KID, September 17, 1980.
21. Compare William Shawcross, Sideshow, p. 298.
22. Note remarks in Carney, op. cit. (note 5 above), p. 10, on the South-west forces.
23. Interview, Sakeo, September 25, 1980.
24. Informant was a teacher in KID; numerous conversations May-September 1980.
25. Interview, KID, September 20, 1980. If that was really the policy in 1976 it later changed, and the members of the DK Hanoi embassy also became victims.
26. Information from Becker's typescript, provided by Ben Kiernan.
27. North of Kramuon Sar street between Monivong and Sisowath boulevards, as far north as km. 6.
28. Becker, p. 4.

29. Becker, pp. 4, 1-2, respectively.
30. Becker, p. 8.
31. "Heder Interviews," p. 29; also Pin Yathay's account, below.
32. Besides these considerations, Phnom Penh radio also emphasized the role of East Zone troops; see Kiernan, "Conflict," pp.

50-51, based on FBIS, also reported by BBC, FE/4881/A3/1-2, April 18, 1975.

33. Jean Lacouture, Survive le peuple cambodgien, pp. 99, 102; Burchett, op. cit., p. 59, also seems to share the view that the 'Montagnards' were "used as shock troops conditioned and indoctrinated to exterminate city-dwellers."

34. Becker, pp. 5, 8.

35. Kiernan, "Conflict," note 154.

36. Ponchaud, Year Zero, pp. 39-45.

37. Including one of my former students (S.S.H.), later an engineer; a Navy Captain (above, p. 125); and a businessman with connections to the royal family (S.M.).

38. Ponchaud, Year Zero, p. 23.

39. Interview, Nong Samet, September 9, 1980.

40. There was also an evacuation toward Kompong Speu, due west, but I have no reports about it.

41. Barron and Paul, pp. 14-20; Pin Yathay, p. 32.

42. Yathay, p. 42.

43. Yathay, chapter 2, p. 46 for the engineer; p. 60 for quotation.

44. Interview, KID, June 1980.

45. K.K., Interview, KID, May 7, 1980.

46. Manuscript report prepared by K.K. in May 1980, and further interviews with K.K. in June 1980.

47. Yathay, pp. 33-34.

48. Yathay, p. 36. A more specific eyewitness account of factional disagreement over evacuation and which indicates possible East Zone opposition is Ping Ling (see Bibliography), pp. 14, 18, where khaki-clad troops tried to send evacuees back to their city homes.

Ping Ling noted factional differences in several contexts, pp. 14, 18, 69-70, 121-122, 204, identifying revolutionaries in khaki uniforms, or "greenshirts," who were on the eastern side of the Mekong, with Sihanouk's forces, and the more brutal "blackshirts" as Khieu Samphan's.

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49. "Heder Interviews," p. 29. It has since been alleged that the decision to evacuate was made by Pol Pot in February (William Shawcross, "The Third Indochina War," New York Review of Books, April 6, 1978, p. 21); and Kiernan, "Conflict," p. 50, says the evacuation was "largely motivated by political concerns." Timothy Carney, "Cambodia: the Unexpected Victory," note 20, cites Pol Pot's 1977 statement on the February decision to evacuate, says that commanders received about 10 days' advance notice, and notes that in some places mimeographed forms had been prepared for the evacuees to fill out.

50. See Hildebrand and Porter, chapter 2; and U.S. Senate, Relief and Rehabilitation of War Victims in Indochina, from which the former often quote. In view of some of the criticism directed at Hildebrand and Porter it must be remembered that their first two chapters rely mainly on impeccable western sources and constitute the best compilation of information on conditions in Phnom Penh at the end of the war. Charles Meyer, Derriere le sourire khmer, p. 169, writing of

pre-1970 conditions, said, "In the Phnom Penh hospitals, submerged by patients, the equipment is often out of order and there is lack of medicine."

51. Migozzi gave a figure of 462 in 1969 (tableau 1, p. 226), and the official figure given to the U.N. for 1971 was 438 (Statistical Yearbook 1972), p. 711. The latter was down from a figure of 486 for 1970 (Statistical Yearbook 1971, p.749), probably reflecting the flight from the country which was already under way.

52. John Pilger, The Age (Melbourne), September 21, 1979. The decrease in availability of medical care began very early in the war, partly for pecuniary reasons. On June 19, 1971 the newspaper Prayuth published a notification from the Ministry of Health to physicians, complaining that they were raising fees and asking them to return to the old level. In 1980 the Khmer doctors in KID were trying to compile a world-wide list of surviving Cambodian doctors, and in July, when they knew the list was incomplete, they had names of nearly 200 who were then living outside Cambodia, which if added to the number working for the PRK and presumed to be with the DK forces would mean a total of at least 230-240. See further below, pp. 165-171.

53. Hildebrand and Porter, p. 53, from an official U.S. report.
54. Ibid.
55. The Sunday Times Magazine, May 4, 1975, pp. 32-48, with photographs.
56. Barron and Paul, pp. 76, 157-158; Yathay, pp. 212-217.

57. See further below, pp. 165-171.

58. Barron and Paul, pp. 17, 76.

59. Mike Snitovsky, Bangkok Post, February 22, 1976.

60, BBC, Summary of World Broadcasts, April 17, 1975, FE/4880/A3/13.

61. Barron and Paul, p. 138; Ponchaud, p. 79, note 1, is incorrect in saying it was 180 gm.

62. Ponchaud, pp. 78-79; Yathay, pp. 62, 66, 77-78, 80.

63. Ponchaud, p. 78.

64. See note 55, above.

65. Statistics taken from Hildebrand and Porter, quoting American and international aid reports, pp. 21-29.

66. Ponchaud, p. 79. Following Prud'homme, p. 255, I use 0.64 as coefficient of conversion of paddy to milled rice.

67. Yathay, pp. 42, 49.

68. Ibid., pp. 25, 27.

69. Ibid., p. 49.

70. Ponchaud, p. 41; Yathay, p. 46; Ping Ling, p. 56, describes such 'looting,' and, pp. 102, 109-111, 127, the regular distribution of 1 can of rice per day to evacuees en route in May 1975.

71. See below, pp. 226-227.

72. Ponchaud, pp. 48-49; and on his tendency to accept anti-Vietnamese propaganda uncritically, see below, pp. 209-210.

73. Written report about C.R., prepared by K.K.

74. Sak Sau, Bangkok Post, February 22, 1976.

75. Yathay, p. 127.

76. See below, pp. 159-161.

77. Ng.P., KID, May 1980.

78. Interview with Mat Ly, former DK East Zone official, PRK Deputy Minister of Agriculture, August 28, 1981, in Phnom Penh.
79. Yathay, p. 287; below, p. 93.
80. Estimate by Mat Ly, August 28, 198 !.
81. Ponchaud, pp. 76, 78; Barron and Paul, pp. 152-155, 203-205; Yathay, pp. 81, 110, 118, 121-133; William Shawcross, "The Khmer Rouge's Iron Grip on Cambodia," FEER, January 2, 1976, p. 9; Vickery, "Kampuchean Demography."
82. Jean Delvert, Le paysan cambodgien, pp. 99, 357.

83. Population:

Southwest - 1,960,000;

East - 1,392,000;

North/Center - 1,333,500;

Northwest .- 908,000;

West - 537,000.

These figures are from Migozzi, p. 228, tableau 2. Because the original statistics are by province, some of them have been divided arbitrarily to fit DK zones, and the resulting totals are intended only as a rough comparison. The official provincial statistics on rice production in 1966-67 give zonal totals (in the same manner as indicated above) of:

Southwest -629,100 tons;

East - 550,400;

Northwest, 549,600;

North/Center - 480,100;

West, 192,700.

The crude rice-to-people ratios were thus:

Northwest 0.605,

East 0.395,

North/Center 0.360,

West 0.357,

Southwest 0.321.

Rice production figures from Annuaire Statistique.

84. Delvert, p. 208. See also chapter 1, above, note 48.

85. See below, pp. 86-100, 131-138.

86. Yathay, pp. 142, 148, 157; below, p. 108.

87. See below, pp. 91, 103, 105, 129.

88. Stephen R. Heder, "From Pol Pot," pp. 8-9.

89. Quinn, p. 19-20. For a similar critique to that presented here, see Chomsky and Herman, pp. 154-156.

90. Quinn, pp. 3, 25.

91. Quinn, p. 24. Quinn's 'KK' (Khmer Kraham-Khmer Rouge) is equivalent to Pol Pot communists.

92. Quinn, pp. 12-13, 16-17.

93. "Heder Interviews," p. 18.

94. DK soldier Tep, cited above, p. 69, and who cannot be accused of making propaganda, since he had politically and personally broken with DK and its remnants.

95. Barron and Paul, chapter 4, pp. 88, 93.

96. Ibid., p. 94.

97. Yathay, pp. 51-52, 57, 58-59.

98. Ibid., p. 62.

99. Ibid., p. 80.

100. Ibid., p. 63.

101. Ibid., pp. 83, 85.

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102. K.K., KID, May 1980; above, p. 74.

103. L.S., Nong Samet, September 5, 1980.

104. I met the girl in Phnom Penh in August 1981, and the men's information was in interviews conducted by Ben Kiernan, who kindly provided me with transcripts.

105. List of 242 "Important Cadres Arrested Between 1976 and.9 April 1978," People's Revolutionary Tribunal, Phnom Penh, August 1979, from Document No. 2.5.24 (French), translated by Stephen Heder, who generously provided me with a copy. The terminal date of this list, cited further as "Tuol Sleng 242," is important because some of the worst purges, and numerous arrests, occurred later.

106. "Heder Interviews," pp. 15, 18. Note congruence with some of Quinn's information, cited in note 92, above.

107. Yathay, pp. 87-91; quotation, p. 91; note his error in calling it Damban 55.

108. Ibid., p. 92.

109. Ibid., pp. 92, 103.

110. Ibid., pp. 96-99.

111. Sak Sau, Bangkok Post, February 22, 1976.

112. Interview, KID, May 1980.

113. S.S., KID, September 8, 1980.

114. T.T., Nong Samet, September 10, 1980; for East Zone purge, see below, p. 136.

115. "Heder Interviews," p. 18.

116. Several conversations, KID, July and September 1980. His brother, a tire factory employee, is cited below, p. 160.

117. Compare Yathay on Prek Taduong, above, p. 89.

118. According to western medical personnel at KID, coconut milk taken directly from the fruit is sterile and provides an acceptable

substitute for intravenous serum. DK medics were thus using a valid emergency procedure.

119. Van, KID, July 25, 1980.

120. It was Van who introduced me to the soldier Tep (above, p. 69), a loyal DK supporter, at least until sometime after April 1975, and an old school friend.

121. Chhuoy, KID, July 26, 1980.

122. Suon commented that it was "no place for advancement." Non Suon, a veteran communist and head of the Agricultural Committee under the Ministry of Economy, was arrested on November 1, 1976 and killed several months later at the Tuol Sleng prison. The information cited here is from his confessions, copied by Ben Kiernan, who provided me with a copy. Of course, one of the purposes of those confessions was to force the accused to confess to false charges, but there is still much information irrelevant to the charges which can be accepted as true. It is also likely that the first of each set of confessions, written before the accused had been tortured, or as in the case of Non Suon, before he was aware of his dangerous situation, contains accurate information.

123. S.K.H., KID, September 1980.

124. Mrs. K.D., KID, September 10, 1980.

125. Nong Chan, July 24, 1980.

126. This officer had joined the revolutionary forces in 1972, along with Tep, had fought continuously throughout the war and the final battle of Phnom Penh, and had been rapidly promoted.

127. Ponchaud, in Le Monde, February 18, 1976; urban evacuees "are left

to the absolute discretion of the local authorities." See also letter from Torben Retbøll, FEER, October 28, 1977, and discussion in Chomsky and Herman, pp. 178-181.

128. Ngo, from Damban 20, said that if cadres were asked why conditions differed from one region to another, they answered that such things were "entirely according to the respective base [local authorities]."

129. Ben Kiernan, "Conflict in the Kampuchean Communist Movement," records information about tolerable conditions in Takeo in 1975 (p. 43), and on pp. 58-59, about 'good' conditions in parts of the Southwest and East in 1975-76. It is now certain from Barron and Paul's description of Damban 25, together with their statistical work (see my "Democratic Kampuchea: CIA to the Rescue"), that their effort may be dismissed as a crude piece of disinformation.

130. "Heder Interviews," pp. 13, 18, 21.

131. Delvert, pp. 496-498.

132. Milton Osborne, Before Kampuchea, pp. 132-133. The workers were quarry laborers.

133. I was made aware, however, that I was at the very limit of safety. The Khmer Republic officer at the small post beside the temple was quite nervous, and ostentatiously did not put my name down in his register, so that if something happened he could pretend ignorance.

134. See "Peang Sophi," pp. 2, 3, 9.

135. Ponchaud, pp. 60-62; Barron and Paul, pp. 67-75; numerous independent informants among refugees from Battambang.

136. Barron and Paul, pp. 157-159.

137. Ibid., pp. 193-196; Ponchaud, pp. 89-91.

138. They never were killed. One of my teacher colleagues at KID knew of the incident and knew some of them personally, and told me they were all finally released and sent to various villages.

139. Both Barron/Paul and Ponchaud seem to have typographical errors in their renditions of the name, probably Phum Samrong, about 20 km north of Battambang city on the main road.

140. See further below, pp. 106, 166-167.

141. Chapter 1, pp. 1-3.

142. Y.P. and family, KID, July 1980. The DK government was always referred to as 'angka,' "the organization." Similarly, Martin's informants reported that when foreigners (Chinese, North Koreans) came to visit rice fields or irrigation works in progress, "the least fit were kept out of sight," and those-remaining had to appear joyful and smiling" (Martin, p. 16).

143. Brother of L.V.O., KID, July 1980.

144. Meng H., KID, July 1980.

145. -Pr., Nong Chan, September 5, 1980.

146. KID, May 1980. This informant had brought his son for treatment in the KID hospital and planned to return home when his son was well. See below, p. 232.

147. H.D., Phnom Penh, August 1981.

148. Page 54.

149. Bangkok Post, February 22, 1976.

150. Only Pin Yathay's account, p. 200, differs on this point and is anomalous, perhaps the proverbial exception which 'proves the rule.'

151. See below, p. 136.

152. P.F., KID, May 12, 1980.

153. Probably "Chea Huon (Vang)," listed in "Tuol Sleng 242" as Member of the Damban Committee.
154. These are the dates the refugees recall. Khek Ben's Tuol Sleng date, June 23, 1977, like that of Vanh, is a couple of months later. At the same date as Vanh, the Tuol Sleng list also has another Member from Damban 1, Douc Pheach (Nup). Some discrepancy in dates given by former DK residents is to be expected, for they lived 312 years without calendars or written materials of any kind.

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155. Probably "Sun Kun (Sui)," Tuol Sleng date July 22, 1977, listed as Deputy Secretary, Damban 4. A number of the names in "Tuol Sleng 242" have obviously been deformed by Vietnamese secretaries who misapprehended Khmer pronunciation.
156. UNHCR office, KID, September 19, 1980.
157. Pages 100-101.

158. Sergeant Chileng, KID, September 1980. It is worth noting in this connection that his parents were peasants in Kandal Province but not in a base area, and they were evacuated to Pursat, where they died. Prasat is a type of tower typical of Khmer and Thai temple architecture.

159. KID Educational Development Center, September 1980.
160. Pages 89-90.

161. Compare Van's comments, above, p. 95.

162. For example, Yathay, p. 234.

163. Heder, "Occupation," pp. 62-63, provides other examples.

164. Above, p. 107.

165. This illustrates both the condition of discipline at that time and place and the attitude toward family relationships, discussed below, pp. 174-178.

166. Carney, "The Organization of Power in Democratic Kampuchea," fig. 3, where 'damban' is translated "sector."

167. A.H.K., KID, July 1980; Sakeo, September 1980.

168. Above, pp. 98-99; "Peang Sophi," p. 9.

169. C.H., KID, June and September 1980; see further below on religion, pp. 179-184.

170. KID, May 10, 1980.

171. Nong Chan, September 5, 1980, a man who had come for the rice distribution.

172. Above, pp. 61-63; Touch Khieu, KID, July 1980, who had seen his son killed but could not explain why he himself, also a soldier, had been spared.

173. See also "Peang Sophi." He lived in Damban 3, part of the time in Sneng.

174. Ng. Chh., KID, July 1980.

175. Barron and Paul, pp. 172-176.

176. Above, pp. 54, 104.

177. Barron and Paul, p. 173.

178. Ibid., pp. 37, 128, 141-142, 149-150.

179. Above, p. 88.

180. Yathay, pp. 131, 133, 144-147, 175.

181. Ibid., pp. 138, 164; and see below, pp. 174-178, on the family.

182. Ibid., pp. 146-149, 158, 163.

183. Ibid., pp. 149, 163, 140-142.

184, Ibid., pp. 142, 150, 172-174.

185. Ibid., pp. 142, 148, 157.

186. Ibid., pp. 177-185, 189, 195-197.

187. Ibid., pp. 196-198.

188. Ibid., pp. 200-264.

189. There were also questions about some of Yathay's remarks in interviews given soon after his escape. See Chomsky and Herman, pp. 143-145.

190. KID, August, September 1981.

191. Ch. S. 5, KID, June 1980.

192. M.C., Nong Chan, September 12, 1980.

193. Conversation in Phnom Penh, September 6, 1981.

194. "Tuol Sleng 242," dated July 12, 1977.

195. The two people who gave these statistics had high school or university education, were accustomed to dealing with figures, and were sober and non-sensational in their accounts.

196. Yathay fled before the arrival of the Southwest cadres and thus provides no evidence on their actions in Dambans 2 and 6.

197. Stephen Heder, "Kampuchea October 1979-August 1980," mimeographed, Bangkok, November 1980, pp. 46-47.

198. "Heder Interviews," p. 18.

199. Ibid., pp. 18, 22.

200. Heder, "Kampuchea October 1979-August 1980," pp. 46-67.

201. Heder, "From Pol Pot," p. 12.

202. Conversations in KID, May 1980, and Phnom Penh, August 29, 1981.
203. Meng H. See above, p. 103.
204. I.S., KID, June 9, 1980.
205. Y.S., KID, September 9, 1980.

206. The visit to Damnak Smach was at the request of Serge Thion, who had previously been there in 1972 as the only foreign journalist ever invited to visit a revolutionary liberated zone during the 1970-75 war. Keo remembered having seen Thion then, and added that wherever Thion was taken, a messenger went ahead to warn Vietnamese troops, who were still contributing to the Cambodian effort, to stay out of sight.

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207. Jan Myrdal, "Why There is Famine in Kampuchea," pp. 16-18.
208. I wish to thank Ben Kiernan for verification of the sequence of events.
209. "Heder Interviews," pp. 13, 14.

210. The purge, as reflected in "Tuol Sleng 242," took 11 top North Zone officials and fourteen Damban 106 leaders in less than two months of February and early March 1977. See further below, pp. 126-129.

211. He was definitely mistaken in believing, as he told me, that two of them remained in a rebel maquis after 1977, since their names appear in "Tuol Sleng 242": Cho Chhan (Sreng/Preng), Deputy Zone Secretary, arrest date February 18, 1977, and Chum Chhum (Tang), Secretary Damban 41, arrest date February 19, 1977.

212. P.P., Nong Chan, September 12, 1980. One of Honda Katuiti's informants, Journey to Cambodia, p. 114, also reported abundant food on rubber plantations.

213. Ponchaud, pp. 72-73.
214. I did not meet this person, C.S. The information is in his written report, given to me by K.K., KID, May 1980.
215. S.S.H., KID, July 1980.
216. S.H., Phnom Penh, September 7, 1981.
217. Family of T.C., KID, September 1980.
218. A.H.K., KID, July 1980; Sakeo, September 1980.
219. Ponchaud, p. 85.
220. S.M., KID, May 1980.
221. L.V.H. family, KID, July 1980.
222. Other of Dr. My Samedy's experiences, including 3 months' employment by DK as medical instructor, are related in Katuiti, pp. 28, 38.

223. I encountered three such cases in which DK rough justice appeared to be concerned with determining the truth, and in which an accused who withstood third-degree interrogation was presumed innocent.

224. Conversation in Phnom Penh, August 1981. The informant is now a PRK civil servant. Similar evidence has been provided by Pol Pot's brother, Lot Suong, who was treated like any other evacuee and who said that in that "remote corner of Kompong Thom where the Kuoy minority lived ... they were kind to us, while the Khmer Rouge in that... part of the country were not particularly ferocious .... Indeed by directing us to that region Buddha saved our lives" (Vu Can, "A Brother of Pol Pot's Saved From Genocide," Vietnam Courier, December
1981, pp. 23-25).

225. Written report of C.S .; many refugees knew of this revolt, which seems to have been confined to Chikreng. In 1976 and 1977 rumors about an imminent return to power of Sihanouk seem to have been widespread, as noted by Yathay, pp. 143, 159.

226. This is the way C.S. told the story. The arrival of East Zone troops and a subsequent struggle between them and Southwest cadres seems strange at that time, although it was mentioned by a refugee whom Ben Kiernan interviewed in France (October 10, 1979). He complicated the matter, however, by saying that the Eastern troops were led by 'Ta Sae' (Kang Chap), who was in fact a Southwest Zone official sent to Kompong Thom in 1976 and to Siemreap in 1977 ("Heder Interviews," p. 21) and was perhaps the commander of the Southwest troops who ultimately took over in Chikreng.

227. Interview, Nong Samet, September 12, 1980. See further discussion below.
228. FBIS, February 27, 1976.
229. Asiaweek, January 26, 1979, p. 15. The story was accepted as fact by Kiernan, "Conflict," p. 53, but such confidence now seems misplaced.

230. Kiernan's informant cited above, note 226. See also Larry Palmer, "Thailand's Kampuchea Incidents," News from Kampuchea I, 4 (October 1977), pp. 1-31.

231. In the pictures he is shown with his consort Monique, Penn Nouth, Khieu Samphan, and "the president of the Revolutionary Committee of Siemreap city."

232. Lacouture, Survive, p. 115, apparently repeating information supplied by Ponchaud, treats it as a real coup d'etat involving dissidents both in the North and in Phnom Penh, but the account is garbled by displacing the revolt of Chakrey from May 1976 ("Tuol Sleng 242") to early 1977.

233. P.K., Siemreap, August 1981.
234. S.F., KID, August 4, 1980.
235. In good areas executions were also predominant, even when few, since there was no starvation at all.
236. "Heder Interviews," p. 20.
237. All details from ibid., pp. 18, 19, 21.

238. Martin, p. 38, also received information that in the provinces of Kratie and Stung Treng "nourishment of the population seems to have been adequate."
239. H.N., KID, July 1980. See below, p. 134, for his East Zone experiences.
240. He gave the name of this cadre as "Yi Kon," perhaps the same as San Bun Hy (Kuon) listed in "Tuol Sleng 242" as Deputy Secretary of Damban 505 and arrested on March 23, 1978.
241. "Heder Interviews," p. 29.
242. Yathay, pp. 101, 120.
243. Quinn, p. 6.
244. Kiernan, "Conflict," p. 9 and passim.
245. "Heder Interviews," p. 23.
246. Ping Ling, pp. 121-122. Also p. 204, comparing very harsh conditions in Kompong Chhnang with better treatment across the river in Kompong Cham province.
247. Quinn, pp. 10, 26. Virtually all of Quinn's informants were from the Southwest, and he did not interview in the Tay Ninh camp across the border from the East.
248. The intensification of the war during 1973, in particular by American bombing, is well known. See William Shawcross, Sideshow.
249. Y.S., KID, July 14, 1980.
250. S.Y., written report prepared by K.K., KID, May 1980.
251. Conversation in Phnom Penh, August 1981.
252. H.N., KID, July 1980.

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253. Major Poc Sareth, The Straits Echo, Penang, June 5, 1976. Chea Sim, since 1979 a member of the PRK government in Phnom Penh, was Secretary of Damban 20.

254. CARE worker, KID, September 13, 1980.

255. Conversation at KID, September 19, 1980.

256. Kampuchea Dossier I, pp. 26-27.

257. Ngo and colleague at KID, September 19, 1980.

258. C.C., KID, September 1980. Martin, however, found examples of technicians employed in the design of dams in Prey Veng and Kompong Cham, but apparently not in other zones.

259. At the People's Revolutionary Tribunal in Phnom Penh in August 1979 40,000 were said to have been sent to Pursat alone.

260. This is in part hearsay evidence and should not be taken as a definitive statement about the fate of So Phim.

261. "Heder Interviews," p. 20.

262. Page 70.

263. Stephen R. Heder, "Origins of the Conflict," The Southeast Asia Chronicle, No.64 (September-October 1978), p. 4.

264. "Heder Interviews," pp. 18, 20, 23, 28.

265. The last is in "Heder Interviews," p. 15. Kiernan, "Conflict," p. 14, says that as early as 1977 Vietnam was being called "the historic enemy," and in January 1979 Pol Pot referred to the Vietnamese people as the "hereditary enemy."

266. Ben Kiernan, "Social Cohesion in Revolutionary Cambodia," Australian Outlook 30, 3 (December 1976), 372-386.
267. Conversations in Phnom Penh, September 1981. For Yathay's evidence see above, pp. 88-90, 92, 114-117.
268. Purges also occurred in the East in Dambans 23 and 24, leaving 20, 21, and 22 as relatively 'good' areas.
269. See below, p. 205.

270. Martin, p. 38, also found that "the 'old' people ... had facilities for procuring supplementary food." Carney, "The Organization of Bower in Democratic Kampuchea," notes that in parts of the West and Southwest 'new' people who had been given administrative responsibility were purged because using them was "no way to build Socialism." See above, p. 96, for the Southwestern reeducation center.

271. See above, pp. 103, 104, 117.

272. "Kampuchea October 1979-August 1980," pp. 46-47. There are thus numerous reports of an 'amnesty' or abolition of status distinctions in 1978, not just the "one refugee" noted by Carney in "The Organization of Power in Democratic Kampuchea."

273. See below, pp. 164-165.

274. See Jan Myrdal, "Why There is Famine in Kampuchea," p. 18.

275. The change in DK ideology has continued since January 1979 in their renunciation of socialism, dissolution of their communist party, and search for allies among capitalist powers. Another interesting suggestion about the peasantry has been made by Martin, p. 15: the ritual aspect of agriculture, which formerly "was as integral a part of the agricultural calendar as physical labor," disappeared under DK, and "for the peasants, the Khmers rouges, in acting this way, offended the spirits, they would be punished sooner or later, and the regime would collapse. Today they are not surprised by its fall."

276. Evidence of T.T., Damban 13, above, p. 94.

277. For example, see William Shawcross, "Kampuchea Revives on Food, Aid and Capitalism," The Bulletin [Australia] , March 24, 1981.

278. BBC, Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB), the Far East (FE), April 19, 1975.

279. Hu Nim was mentioned by BBC on April 23, 1975 and Hou Yuon on April 24. As late as February 1976 Norodom Phurissara, who had not fled Phnom Penh for the maquis until 1972, was still Minister of Justice (FBIS, February 27, 1976).

280. Royaume du Cambodge, Les leaders de la résistance khmère et membres du gouvernement royal d'union nationale à l'intérieur du Cambodge (Editions du F.U.N.C., 1972).

281. Vickery, "Looking Back at Cambodia."

282. China Pictorial, Supplement to No. 6, 1973.

283. There have been at least three stories about the end of Hou Yuon. For one of them see Lacouture, Survive, p. 117. Another is reflected in Kiernan, "Conflict," p. 7, note.

284. BBC, August 14, 1975; FEER, October 21, 1977, p. 24.

285. BBC, April 8, 1976; FBIS, April 14, 1976.

286. Kiernan, "Conflict," pp. 53-55, and personal communication on Phuong and the Energy Committee.

287. Kiernan has provided information about the identifications of some Standing Committee members.

288. Kong, the DK soldier cited above, p. 137, said that Vorn Vet was on good terms with So Phim and often visited the East; and a former courier (nirasa) of Non Suon told me in the Sakeo camp (September 26, 1980) that Non Suon, So Phim, and Vorn Vet (as well as Hu Nim and Khieu Samphan) shared similar views and that all of them met frequently in 1975-76. In addition, Thiounn Mum, an important DK

intellectual, told Stephen Heder (interview, August 4, 1980) that Vorn Vet had been in the Indochina Communist Party. He would thus have been of the same faction as So Phim and Non Suon. The inevitable difficulty in identifying some of the DK officials and their political tendencies is illustrated by Burchett's misapprehension as late as 1981 (Triangle, p. 170), and in spite of his long Cambodian experience and good contacts, that "Volvet" [Vorn Vet] was "the code name for Son Sen."

289. FBIS, April 20, 1976.

290. For Kang Chap see above, p. 130, note 226.

291. FBIS, October 26, 1976. The date of the Cambodian message was October 25 and Hua's appointment was on October 22, which accounts for Kiernan's reference in "Conflict," p. 57 and note 188.

292. I wish to thank Ben Kiernan for supplying some of these dates. "Heder Interviews," p. 22, is mistaken in giving the date of Nhim Ros's arrest as 1977.

293. "Tuol Sleng 242"; information on Nhim Ros from Ben Kiernan.

294. In fact, people like Mok and Pok may have influenced the development of the Pol Pot line (see chapter 5, below). Thiounn Mum, in his interview with Heder (note 288 above), confirmed that Mok and Pok were of different background to the rest of the DK

leadership. More information on these men appears in Ben Kiernan's thesis.

295. Kiernan, "Conflict," pp. 53-57.

296. I do not find Kiernan's discussion of Chinese parallels convincing, but the subject deserves more detailed study. In the present work I do not intend to pursue that question at all. The true Thai government attitude toward DK was revealed, perhaps unwittingly and in contrast to a propaganda line which has been served up periodically, by Thai Supreme Commander Gen. Saiyud Kerdphol in December 1982:

"For the first time in 40 years [January 1979 after the fall of DK], we had a powerful enemy poised on our doorsteps. No longer could we afford to focus solely on domestic security concerns" (SWB, FE/7204/A3/2, from Nation Review, December 7, 1982).

297. "Tuol Sleng Professional Lists": lists of over 1,200 members of various occupations whose names have been found on the Tuol Sleng arrest and execution lists, kindly provided by Timothy Carney of the U.S. Embassy, Bangkok.

298. Confession of Neou Kantha, number N.175, dated March 5, 1978. See also Anthony Barnett, Ben Kiernan and Chantou Boua, "Kampuchea: a Special Report," New Statesman, May 2, 1980, pp. 669-676. The 10,000 or more dossiers of former prisoners still extant may constitute the best documentary evidence about DK.

299. Ben Kiernan, "Documenting Pol Pot's 'terror by mail,'" Monash Review, March 1982, points out the impossibility of such a claim; and Ieng Sary finally admitted the regime's responsibility - see Elizabeth Becker, "The Death Chambers of the Khmer Rouge," Washington Post, August 2, 1981.

300. The Kompong Thom background of Deuch (Kaing Gek Iev), Mom Nay, and Pol Pot was investigated by Ben Kiernan during his research trip to Cambodia in 1980.

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301. Carney, "The Organization of Power in Democratic Kampuchea"; see also Frank Snepp, Decent Interval (New York: Random House, 1977), p. 340; conversation with Bizot, June 1982.

302. Yoneo Ishii, ed., Thailand: A Rice-Growing Society, p. 198; Kiernan, "Conflict," p. 45.

303. On Chile see Monthly Review, Vol. 28 (June 1976), "The New Reformism," by the editors, pp. 9-10, and Edward Boorstein, Allende's Chile; An Inside View (New York: International Publishers, 1977); and on the Mexican revolution, Eric R. Wolf, Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century, pp. 31-43.

304. Propaganda emanating from Sihanouk's Royal Government of National Union (RGNUK) had stated that only the 7 top 'traitors' of the Lon Nol government would be executed after the revolutionary victory.

305. I accept the argument of Shawcross, Sideshow, that the type of war waged against Cambodia by the United States was an important influence in what happened after April 1975; and I believe that if such intervention had not occurred, developments in Cambodia would have been very different.

306. When Ping Ling, p. 11, first noticed masses of people moving out of the city he could not tell whether they were under orders or proceeding voluntarily, and he noted, "many people owns [sic] or have relatives in the provinces thus to them, the idea of being safer and the problem of obtaining foodstuff are better off [sic] in the countryside."

307. This very rough figure has been reached by estimating that one-tenth of the army were officers, and by taking one-fifth of the civil servants (93,000 in the last prewar years, according to Prud'homme, p. 44) as holders of significant authority.

308. It has become the fashion to argue that since Pol Pot later allegedly emphasized the political need to evacuate Phnom Penh there could have been no valid economic reason (William Shawcross, "The Third Indochina War," New York Review of Books, April 6, 1978, p. 21). It is not certain that Pol Pot made such a statement, but in any

case his remarks about past events represent no more than his current line and are of little worth as historical evidence. Incidentally, the example of present PRK policies cannot be used as an argument against DK methods, since the dirty work has already been done, and most of those who would have refused to acquiesce in PRK rule, as they would have rejected DK, have already been eliminated or have gone into exile. As I suggested above (chapter 1, note 74). their behavior in the major refugee center indicates that they would not have willingly cooperated in the discipline required by even a benevolent revolutionary regime in Cambodia's postwar conditions.

309. FBIS, May 24, 1978; and earlier Khieu Samphan (FBIS, April 18, 1977) had said, "we must nurture our people. ... a sufficient amount of three, two and a half or two small cans [of rice] is allocated daily." In July 1982, at KID, I met some former base peasants recently transferred to KID from the Kamphut camp, who said that in their area of Saang-Koh Thom (Damban 25), application of new irrigation and fertilizer techniques had permitted 2-3 crops per year and raised yields significantly, perhaps even to 3 tons. Consumption, however, was kept down and the rice was taken away.

310. FBIS, March 29, 1978, April 14, 1978, May 19, 1978, May 25, 1978. See aiso, however, Donald Wise, "Eradication of the Old Dandruff," FEER, September 23, 1977, reporting that the "normal ration per person is two condensed milk-tins of dry rice a day"; "Peang Sophi," p. 7, claiming that at a canal site in 1975 three cans per day (750 g.) was provided; Pin Yathay (interview reported by FBIS, July 20, 1977), who said that "villagers are twice daily apportioned

two bowls of steamed rice or rice gruel ... with a measure of salt." Martin, p. 39, considers that total rice production was about equal to prewar years and that famine was not due to low production, but to the "massive export of the harvest which returned in the form of armament for the struggle against the Vietnamese."

311. Interview with Ouk Bun Chhoeun, Phnom Penh, September 11, 1981; "Heder Interviews," p. 20.
312. On these questions see additional detail in Martin, pp. 23, 26.
313. "Heder Interviews," pp. 4, 20; FBIS, April 14, 1978, quoted above, reporting that enemies within the cooperatives had sabotaged the rice yield.
314. Yathay, p. 171, and see pp. 169-171 for a fascinating account of such financial operations.
315. "Heder Interviews," p. 20.
316. Non Suon's confessions; "Heder Interviews," p. 15, a former courier who worked for Non Suon.
317. Yathay, pp. 100-101.
318. Kiernan, "Conflict," p. 51.
319. FBIS, April 20, 1977.
320. Ibid., October 2, 1978.
321. Speech by Pol Pot, September 29, 1977, FBIS, October 4, 1977; quotation is from Pol Pot; see further below, p. 161.
322. FBIS, April 18, 1977.
323. Ibid., April 17, 1978.
324. Yathay, p. 59. This is also seen in the Tuol Sleng confessions of Non Suon and of workers who were later arrested.

325. The worker in question was a brother of Van, above, pp. 94-96, who provided me with the information.
326. Interview at Sakeo, September 24, 1980.

327. "Tuol Sleng Professional Lists." It would appear that Honda Katuiti's surmise, Journey to Cambodia, p. 41, about the relative survivability of railway workers, may not be entirely correct. The two families he met may have simply been lucky.

328. "Heder Interviews," p. 13, for skirmish between workers and soldiers. Ben Kiernan disagrees with my interpretation of the role of Vorn Vet presented here and in note 288 above, and his view will be presented in forthcoming work.

329. Ponchaud's brief comment, p. 210, is accurate as far as it goes.

330. One of my informants estimated that about four-fifths of his group at Boeung Trabek survived, which is contrary to Burchett, Triangle, p. 130, alleging that only 85 out of approximately 1,000 survived. An account by one who returned in 1978 is Y Phandara, Retour à Phnom Penh.

331. The names of 30 are included in the "Tuol Sleng Professional Lists."
332. Ah example of the former was Seng Chen An (note 334, below), and information about the latter was provided by Ea Meng Try, whose wife returned in 1976.
333. "Heder Interviews," p. 3.

334. One former Khmer Republic official, Seng Chen An, whose written report I obtained at KID in May 1980, mentioned filling several notebooks.

335. The information on both these men is from "Heder Interviews," pp. 2, 3, 4, and is incidental rather than thorough, since the interviews were not organized to elicit this type of information.

336. See note 334, above.
337. See below, p. 165. Y Phandara, p. 101, notes that in 1978, in contrast to earlier years, "they were giving us enough rice."
338. Pace Burchett, Triangle, p. 130, who wrote that they survived "mainly by hiding their true identity."
339. Mentioned in "Heder Interviews," p. 4.

340. Information from Thiounn Mum's interview with Stephen Heder, August 4, 1980; Jan Myrdal, "Why There is Famine in Kampuchea," pp. 17-18; above, p. 142.

341. Report of Seng Chen An.
342. "Heder Interviews," p. 4; and conversations with M.E.C. and C.C., KID, July 1980. Strangely, Y Phandara does not mention that occasion.
343. "Tuol Sleng Professional Lists"; above, note 51 and pp. 75-76.

344. Above, pp. 53, 101. In addition Dr. My Samedi knew of 8 doctors, 3 surviving, obviously different individuals in the Northern Zone

where he was located (above, p. 125), as reported in Katuiti, p. 38. Ping Ling, pp. 127, 145, also mentions distribution of quinine, cholera injections, and sanitary instruction from a DK doctor during the evacuation.

345. Yathay, p. 213; the policy and situation inferable from refugee accounts were stated by Khieu Samphan: "all cooperatives have their own hospitals and laboratories for compounding medicines ... although they remain primitive" (FBIS, April 18, 1977); and they were still only "of handicraft quality" a year later (FBIS, April 17, 1978).

346. Story of a former assistant to foreign journalists, KID, May 1980.

347. Siv said the woman, who seemed half insane and who boasted of having eaten human liver, eventually came to KID as a refugee and became a very active evangelical Christian convert. This, according to a UNHCR person who still remembered the case in 1983, had facilitated the woman's resettlement in the United States.

348. Above, p. 129. Charles Meyer, Derrière le sourire khmer, p. 169, writing of conditions before 1970, said, "in the provinces infirmaries had only a few tubes of aspirin [and] in Mondulkiri, the most unhealthy province in the Kingdom, a young physician would get five thousand quinine pills every six months for fifteen thousand inhabitants."

349. This depends on the final count of surviving doctors abroad. See notes 51-52 above and accompanying text. There were also

physicians who had joined the DK ranks before 1975; Malcolm Caldwell and Lek Hor Tan, Cambodia in the Southeast Asian War (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), p. 431, give names of 25 physicians on the'DK side in 1971, and only two of those names figure in the "Tuol Sleng Professional Lists." What those doctors did during 1975-79 is unknown, and they may have been busy just caring for the DK leaders and foreign guests. The Yugoslav journalists who visited Cambodia in 1978 reported that medicine in Phnom Penh was of good quality with "super-modern medical equipment" in the hospitals and "the old renowned Phnom Penh doctors" in attendance (BBC, April 29, 1978, FE/5801/B/5).

Whatever the total number of doctors (200-250), the population/doctor ratio meant that medicine in DK would still have been very primitive, even if there had been no persecutions.

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350. "Heder Interviews," p. 14.
351. Ponchaud, p. 221. Van, above, p. 95, reported the same thing in the Southwest.
352. The possible use of coconut milk was confirmed by Western doctors working at KID in 1980.
353. I was witness to these practices in KID.

354. Quotations from Khieu Samphan (FBIS, April 18, 1977) and Ieng Sary (FBIS, May 5, 1977). The abolition of traditional schools was confirmed by Pol Pot in his speech of September 27, 1977 (Nayan Chanda, FEER, November 21, 1977, p. 23). See also Pol Pot's speech of September 27, 1978 (FBIS, October 2, 1978).

355. Some of these textbooks may be seen in the Tuol Sleng archives.

356. Ngo, from Koh Sautin, Damban 22, in conversations in KID, September 1980.

357. Conversation in Sakeo, May 1980.

358. Conversation with C.C., returnee from North Korea, KID, September 20, 1980.

359. "Heder Interviews," p. 4; C.C. in KID mentioned leng Sary's children, and Y Phandara, pp. 99, 102, the son of Khieu Samphan, pace the indecent obsession of John Barron and Anthony ("kdar ngoap") Paul, in Barron and Paui, p. 47, and Asiaweek, January 26, 1979, p. 13.

360. The archival documents had at some time been turned out on the floor and in August 1981 had not yet been replaced in proper order. Although some important files, and nearly all the pre-1970 newspaper collections are missing, many valuable collections have been preserved, including internal security reports of the 1950s which Ben Kiernan has used to prepare his thesis on the history of Cambodian communism.

361. Yathay, pp. 138, 164. In an interview soon after his escape from DK, Yathay had said that communal dining had an impact on society since "the family unit has become superfluous as angka lets it be known that they, and not the fathers, are putting food in young Cambodians' mouths," which reflects a view of what the ideal family should be (FBIS, July 20, 1977).

362. Ben Kiernan's interview with Leang Leng Y. When I brought up this subject with the former base peasants from Damban 25 who had reported on high rice yields (note 309, above), they said that, at a date they could not recall, children over 5 years of age had been put in special centers and allowed home visits every 10 days.

363. Pol Pot once said, "our policy to increase our population is recording good initial success. From mid-1977 to mid-1978 there were 392,000 births out of a population of 7,800,000." "The rate of our population growth has surpassed that of the precoup period." "We must thus pay great attention to raising and improving the living conditions of our people and constantly bettering their health so as to accelerate the growth of our population" (FBIS, October 2, 1978).

364. Above, pp. 105, 115.

365. Interview with Mat Ly, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, PRK, in Phnom Penh, August 28, 1981; Yathay, pp. 287, 316; Y Phandara, p. 122.

366. Barron and Paul, pp. 96-97; Ponchaud, p. 145, who correctly treats it as an exception, if true at all. There is no mention of this in Yathay.

367. Yathay, p. 287; and pp. 314-315, account of 3 cadres executed for having intercourse with a woman evacuee.

368. Above, pp. 105, 109. Honda Katuiti, pp. 89, 104, 121-122, reports on people involved in forced group marriages, but also includes the story (p. 181) of a Japanese woman married to a Cambodian and who said there was "no established system of forced marriage between a man and a woman who had not seen each other." According to Ben Kiernan there were many instances of true forced marriages, and he will present the evidence in a forthcoming publication. The Damban 25 base peasants cited in notes 309 and 362, above, and whom I questioned after hearing Kiernan's opinion, were unable to confirm the occurrence of forced marriage. The different testimonies may simply reflect the zonal and regional differences apparent in other respects, but of course 'forced marriage' is very much a culturally determined category.

369. S.B.H., KID, June 16, 1980.

370. The right of a woman to freely terminate a marriage was recognized in Cambodian custom, not in the legal system based on French law. Because of the legal difficulty for a woman to initiate divorce proceedings, some women refused to have their marriages registered.

371. In fact, for many poor girls prostitution was a way to independence and increased material well-being for themselves and

their families. There has been too little discussion in sociological literature of the liberating effect of prostitution in certain societies.

372. In Cambodian conditions, 'middle-class' meant urban, educated, and with a comfortable income either from work or family support.

373. Yathay, p. 168. Ping Ling, p. 247, was told by a villager that the DK sex rules were to "discourage raping among the communist troops. Or their troops towards the civilians. ... [and] trying to abolish the practice of the rich during Lon Nol's regime where they have more than one wife or when they forced young girls to become their concubines."

374. Yathay, p. 411. This is at least part of the significance of the August 1975 Tung Padevat ("Revolutionary flag") article cited by Kiernan, "Conflict," pp. 16-17, and which was clearly aimed at the possibility of resurgence of old-fashioned nepotism in the DK administration.

375. Kiernan, "Conflict," p. 58, on separation; Kampuchean Chronicles, p. 25.
376. Transcript of interview conducted by Ben Kiernan.
377. Related to me by a person who had such experience as a child.
378. Section XV, Article 20 of the Constitution.
379. See Le Sangkum 1 (August 1965), p. 22, for a photograph of monks carrying earth, presumably for a road or dam construction project.

380. This general picture is supported by refugee accounts from all over the country and even finds confirmation, perhaps inadvertent, in Ponchaud, who told the story of a wounded officer convalescing in Wat Po Veal, the largest temple in Battambang (p. 61), and who reported that at another Battambang temple there were still 200 monks in residence in September 1975, and some there as late as January 1976.

381. Van, KID, July 1981.
382. Nguon C., KID, July 24, 1980.
383. See chapter 1, above, p. 12, and note 29.

384. This Pali term, generally translated 'religion' but originally meaning 'order,' carries a different semantic load than the western term, and even in a literal sense can be more easily and acceptably used to cover both Buddhism and Communism.

385. Ponchaud, p. 155.
386. See above, pp. 5-6.
387. Osborne, Before Kampuchea, pp. 69-70; and my review of same in Asian Studies Association of Australia Review (1980), pp. 125-127, for the quotation.
388. Ping Ling, pp. 86, 204.
389. See above, chapter 1, page 11.

390. Ponchaud, p. 153; Kiernan, "Samlaut," pp. 1, 7, note 13, citing 1970 news reports. An example of a revolutionary Cham is Mat Ly, currently (1981) Deputy Minister of Agriculture in the PRK

government, who confirmed that some villages in the Center and East had been massacred for refusing to give up Islamic customs (interview, Phnom Penh, August 28, 1981).

391. In News from Kampuchea I, 1 (1977), p. 8. Although much of what the Tarrs said about Cambodia in 1975 now seems excessively rose-tinted, their report on the exodus from Phnom Penh fits well with the picture inferable from some refugee accounts, and the detail about the Chams there is not something which they, or anyone else, would have been likely to invent.

392. Delvert, pp. 154-155, on importance of pork. Mat Ly (note 390, above) knew of one village which had rebelled over the question of eating pork and had suffered large-scale executions (in Krauchchmar, Damban 42), which confirms an anti-Cham policy there, but, again, suggests a re-examination of the question of food rations.

393. Ponchaud, p. 152.

394. Wat Koh, near the Central Market, and Wat Sampeou Meas, near the Olympic Stadium, had been razed.

395. Information provided by early returnees whom I met both in KID and in Phnom Penh,

396. See chapter 1, above, on non-Buddhist peasant areas and iconoclastic attitudes in some peasant milieux.

397. Kampuchean Chronicles, p. 19; and see chapter 2, above, pp. 39-40.

398. Time, July 15, 1966, on Indonesia; the second country in question is Brazil, one of the models of 'free world' capitalist progress. See Time, September 11, 1978, pp. 14-15, for those estimates, which are worse than the equivalent points of the Cambodian STV, and which even Time found disturbing.

399. Nation Review (Bangkok), September 29, 1980, quoting from Thai Rath, August 16, 1981; Bangkok Post, October 18, 1981.

400. New York Times, October 12, 1979.

401. "Kampuchea: a Demographic Disaster."

402. Above, p. 123; and archives of the prison at Kraing Ta Chan, district of Tram Kak, province of Takeo, complete to mid-1978, after which other executions could have occurred, but probably not over 50 times the number carried out over the preceding 3 years. Information from Ben Kiernan.

403. Royaume du Cambodge, Minitè du Plan, Résultats préliminarires du recensement général de la population 1962, Phnom Penh, April 1962; République Khmer, Annuaire statistique1971, p.29, tableau 11-1.

404. Prud'homme, p. 250; G. S. Siampos, cited in Migozzi, p. 267, tableau 41; Migozzi, p. 269, tableau 43, and p. 226, tableau 1, respectively.

405. "Kampuchea: a Demographic Catastrophe"; 7.1 million (1970) compounded annually by 2.2% would have produced over 7.9 million by 1975.

406. FEER, November 14, 1980, p. 9; and December 19, 1980, p. 37.

407. Interview with Mat Ly, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Phnom Penh, August 28, 1981.

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408. Projections of a 1980 population based on the assumption of peacetime conditions since the census of 1962, and which thus show a total of nearly 10 million, are irrelevant for an assessment of the DK period. Examples are Serge Baudouin, "La volonté de vivre du peuple cambodgien," Le Monde Diplomatique, November 1982, p. 16; and Meng-Try Ea, "Population in Kampuchea: an Assessment," presented at Kampuchea in the 1980s: Prospects and Problems, An International Conference hosted by the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, November 12-14, 1982.

409. "Kampuchea: a Demographic Catastrophe," pp. 7-11.
410. Ibid., p. 8.
411. Yathay, p. 149.

# CHAPTER 4 Kampuchea: From Democratic to People’s Republic

## The War with Vietnam

In this chapter, as in the last, the emphasis is on the evidence supplied by people who lived through, or close to, the events described. This means that in the first section, on the war with Vietnam, the purpose is not to present a perfectly accurate total chronology of events, which can be found elsewhere, but to show how the development of hostilities was perceived by ordinary people within the country. This in turn will lend credence to an interpretation of the war which has already been accepted by many foreign observers and important sections of the international press.

Some news of conflict between socialist Vietnam and Democratic Kampuchea, first of all over control of certain offshore islands, reached the outside world not long after the general Indochina war was over in 1975.1

But given that the communist victory in Cambodia and each succeeding change in its leadership were interpreted as a strengthening of the supposedly pro-Vietnamese faction of that leadership group, the conflicts between the two countries were not likely to receive proper attention. Interest in Cambodia up to 1977 was focused on the evidence that DK might be a chamber of horrors, which satisfied the general anti-communist prejudices of most western news media and official propaganda organs, and provided an ideological weapon to discredit all Southeast Asian socialism,

even though it was clear that similar horrors could not be discovered in Laos or Vietnam.

Little attention was given to the possibility that the Cambodian situation, if true as portrayed, was aberrant even within Asian communism, or to the consequences of that aberration.

The seriousness of the Cambodia-Vietnam disagreement only appeared fully in 1977 with the outbreak of warfare on a scale that could not but be noted in the international press, together with serious public accusations by both sides toward the end of that year. Cambodia broke off diplomatic relations and Vietnam charged the Cambodians with atrocities like those in the worst refugee stories appearing in the western press since 1975.2

Subsequently the evidence of a real war situation increased; and the invasion of Cambodia that began in December 1978, and which resulted in the overthrow of the DK regime, was easily predictable.

Although most of the refugees, including the former DK cadres at Sakeo, were too far from the centers of power to be well-informed about the causes of the conflict and its relation to policy formulation either in Vietnam or Cambodia, their memories of what they saw and heard are of some interest in studying the question, with the caveat that their dating of events may be rather imprecise.

As would be expected, the refugees who had both the earliest and the most information were those who had been close to the border.

Pin Yathay heard artillery fire on the border as early as May 1975.3 Mr. S.S., from Damban 13, related that in April 1976 he had been in a mobile brigade near the border in Kirivong and observed fighting between Vietnamese and Cambodian forces. The local village chief (protean phum) explained that Cambodian forces were attacking and were going to liberate Kampuchea Krom, the old Khmer areas of southern Vietnam. According to S.S., they penetrated over 10 km into Vietnam in that attack.

No other refugee claimed direct knowledge of such early warfare, but then no one else I met had been so close to the border.4 Only T.T., who had been a bit farther from the border, had heard rumors of a Cambodian attack as early as 1976. In that year, however, he was present at a large public meeting at which 'Ta Mok,' chief of the Southwest, warned of the possibility of war with Vietnam. He related the conflict in part to Cambodian-Vietnamese disputes dating from before 1975, in particular the efforts of CPK cadres in the Southwest to expel Vietnamese troops, advisers, and population from Cambodia in 1973, an operation in which he claimed thousands had been killed. Because of that, 'Ta Mok' said. the Vietnamese would seek revenge and Cambodia must be ready to resist them.5

In Damban 25 two teachers who had joined the revolution before 1975 observed the beginning of strong anti-Vietnamese propaganda in 1976, and heard low-ranking cadres speak of plans to reconquer Kampuchea Krom and Saigon.6

By 1977 many people in the regions adjoining Vietnam had some inkling of serious conflict between the two countries. From Damban 25 there are eyewitness reports of sharp Cambodian attacks on Vietnam and artillery shelling of markets across the border; and propaganda sessions were increasingly devoted to the subject of offensives against and victory over Vietnam.

In Damban 13, S.S., cited above, heard that the Cambodians attacked first and occupied some Vietnamese territory for about 10 days.8 Then, in November, the Vietnamese countered, at first unsuccessfully, but on a second attempt penetrated about 40 km and occupied the area for about a month, during which they offered 'new' people a chance to go to Vietnam. Many people from Kompong Chrei, Kirivong, and Kampot took the opportunity.

Late in 1978, in Damban 13, there was a public meeting at which an official announcement of the war and forthcoming Vietnamese invasion was made, but no fighting occurred there until January 1979 when the first Vietnamese troops appeared and the DK administration fled.

Some of these events were probably the source of the news which reached T.T. He heard of a Vietnamese attack on Kirivong and a Cambodian counterattack to drive them out, after which many people from the border districts were brought farther into the interior and killed, probably because of the pro-Vietnamese attitude reported by S.S.

Then, sometime in 1977 or 1978 in T.T.'s area, there were meetings announcing the new policy of equality between base and new people, which was specifically linked with the need for all to unite in opposition to the Vietnamese. In May or June 1978 there was also a meeting to tell of So Phim's revolt in the East,9 and in late 1978 there were more meetings to announce the beginning of the war, including a Cambodian attack on Vietnamese settlements from which large quantities of water pumps and corrugated tin were brought back as loot. When in January 1979 war actually came to Damban 33, the cadres said that the invading Vietnamese would kill everyone and the populace, frightened, at first followed along in the DK retreat.

In the Eastern Zone, the second large DK administrative unit bordering Vietnam, there seems to have been less official information given to the populace about conflicts with Vietnam,10 which at first seems strange, since Tay Ninh, adjoining Damban 23, was a major objective of one of the Cambodian attacks. But this seeming anomaly may be another piece of the evidence converging to show major policy differences between East and Southwest.

The East Zone administration may have wished to minimize the differences; and after their liquidation in May 1978 the East was probably considered a nest of traitors and undeserving of government confidence.

A well-educated refugee from Damban 20 had heard of the big Cambodian attack on Tay Ninh in October-November 1977. At the time the DK authorities boasted of killing many people and claimed

that the purpose of the attack was to forestall plans to take Cambodia into an Indochina Federation. The informant had also heard that So Phim was considered pro-Vietnamese.11

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In Damban 24, Baphnom district, a former engineer did not hear of warfare until early 1978; and Vietnamese troops did not arrive in his district until April 1979.

The most interesting report from the East was not that of a ‘new’ person but from Kong, the former high school student who had joined the revolutionary forces in 1973 and who after April 1975 was assigned to a headquarters unit in Phnom Penh.12 He related that in January 1977 he was sent with a communications unit from Phnom Penh to the East. In the communications unit, behind the front lines, he heard of skirmishes along the border, and in July or August 1977 of a Cambodian attack on Tay Ninh involving So Phim’s Eastern troops, the troops of ‘Ta Moeun’ from the West, a northern division, and other troops. The DK administration claimed the Vietnamese had attacked first, but Kong said he saw no evidence of that nor of any other Vietnamese attacks until the end of 1978.

As far as he could tell, the Vietnamese merely countered the Cambodian attacks but did not penetrate into Cambodian territory.

Similar operations were continued into 1978 up until the Vietnamese invasion of the end of that year.13 In the informant's personal opinion, there may have been a plan to reconquer Kampuchea Krom, although it was never announced. He also believes that So Phim disapproved of the attacks on Vietnam, but in 1977 could not help but go along with them.

Farther away from the border and in a different zone, an informant from Prey Chhor, Damban 41, where new people were treated worse than in most places, said that there was never any official word, no meeting to inform the people of troubles with Vietnam, and no announcement of the beginning of the war. He first heard of it in November 1978 from some cadres who had clandestinely listened to a Vietnamese radio broadcast; and the administration tried to hide the true state of affairs until Vietnamese troops actually reached Prey Chhor in January 1979. There many DK units were bypassed by the Vietnamese and remained in place to wreak terrible vengeance on those who seemed to have supported or acquiesced in the occupation. In February the informant saw "100" corpses of people killed by DK troops and in nearby Prey Totung burnt-out villages and two trucks of headless corpses.14

Northward along the border in Kratie, Damban 505, the former Phnom Penh intellectual who provided most of my information on that region had heard of border skirmishes in 1977-78; and "after the East Zone revolt," which means after late May 1978, he heard that Cambodia had attacked Vietnam, invaded as far as Locninh, and continued fighting along the border until the Vietnamese first entered

Damban 505 near Snuol in November 1978.15 He was in that area at the time and claimed to have observed that the Salvation Front nucleus was first organized there and then asked for Vietnamese help against D.K.16

A Cambodian Christian pastor in another part of Kratie heard DK personnel boast in early 1977 of having defeated a Vietnamese invasion; and after returning to Phnom Penh in 1979, the same man met a Cambodian from southern Vietnam who claimed that the first attack in 1977 had been by DK forces against Vietnam.17 As would be expected, both because of distance and poor organization, the new people of the Northwest were less well informed about the national crisis. Many of them report that there were no public meetings about the war and that they had no news of it until Vietnamese troops began arriving in 1979.18

In Damban 3, of course, things were different. In a settlement of 80% new people19 there was a meeting on “April 4, 1977” to celebrate a victory over the Vietnamese. It was announced that the Vietnamese had invaded first and then the DK forces countered by attacking Hatien and Chau Doc.20

Another resident of Damban 3 also heard of war in “1977,” via an official Phnom Penh radio broadcast of an interview with a Vietnamese prisoner. In his district, near the end of 1978, there was also a big public meeting at which cadres boasted that DK had reconquered a large part of Kampuchea Krom, the old Cambodian area of southern Vietnam.21

The former university student who had been able to function successfully as a poor peasant in Damban 7, Pursat, said that near the end of 1977 there was a public meeting to announce the fighting with Vietnam and to ask for volunteers for the army. They took only very young people, mostly from base peasant families. Very few new youth, only the most trusted, were acceptable even if they volunteered. In that area the Vietnamese troops arrived in March 1979, and the informant fled with a number of others to begin his own anti-DK and anti-Vietnamese maquis.22

It is noteworthy that whenever the refugee information on the war may be pinpointed in time and place, it corresponds closely to contemporary press reports, which shows their memories for these details to be fairly accurate.

A persistent feature of most of the above refugee accounts is the Cambodian responsibility for initiating the military action of which they had heard. It is also interesting that at the lower levels of administration, enthusiastic DK cadres often believed the objective to be the reconquest of Kampuchea Krom, although the extent to which they represented official thinking is impossible to assess.23 At least the top DK leadership did not admit such a goal in the political information which they personally disseminated, for example, in the centers for the post-1975 returnees from abroad.

The reliability of the refugee information on what they heard or saw in 1977-79 is probably quite high, since although they are anti-DK,

they are also anti-Vietnamese and have no personal or political reasons to minimize Vietnamese responsibility for the war.

These admittedly sparse bits of evidence, from within the country and from among strata of the population without access to information about wider national policy, are also interesting for their agreement with Vietnamese claims and with the contemporary scene as viewed by western analysts.

Thus Asiaweek revealed late in 1978 that “most intelligence analysts in Bangkok agree that Cambodian raids and land grabs escalated the ill-will … until peace was irretrievable,” and it was not until September 1978 that "Vietnam has recovered from surprising initial defeats in the conflict with Cambodia [and] … now has the upper hand."24

Moreover, examination of Cambodian internal affairs indicates, contrary to a certain conventional wisdom which has Vietnam planning the invasion of Cambodia in early 1978 as a function of the changing relationships with China and the USSR, that the overthrow of DK would not have been undertaken until after the East Zone coup of May 1978 which finally destroyed the Cambodian faction friendly to Vietnam. Subsequently, when the Vietnamese campaign moved ahead so rapidly that they outran their logistics, it was clear that their assessment of the strength of the DK regime and its popular support was seriously in error, that its support was much less than they had imagined, and they would thus certainly not have undertaken an invasion if the East and allied high-level cadres in other zones had remained intact.25

The pattern of hostilities adduced above also converges with the analysis of Stephen R. Heder who, in three different articles, has devoted considerable attention to the details of the Cambodia-Vietnam conflict since 1975; and in view of certain conclusions which will be drawn after discussion of the evidence and his treatment of it, we must note, ad hominem, that he takes a pro-Cambodian stance.26

According to Heder's accounts, with which I find no grounds for disagreement on the basic facts, there were land and sea skirmishes immediately after April 1975, but they did not lead to serious warfare and seemed to have been defused by early 1976, even if the causes of conflict had not been resolved. 1976 was a year of peace, a fact which may prove relevant in the discussion of Cambodian internal politics.

Then, in early 1977, the Cambodians increased pressure on certain disputed zones left from Sihanouk's dealings with the Vietnamese in 1967 and "the escalatory rounds of armed clashes … probably began when the Kampucheans attempted to drive the Vietnamese forces out of disputed zones they felt had been illegally occupied by the Vietnamese between 1965 and 1975."27 By April-May 1977 Cambodia began to initiate military activities (raids and artillery fire) not only in the disputed areas but also in what they acknowledged as Vietnamese territory as well;28 and Vietnam answered the challenge by sending several thousand troops into the border zones.29

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There followed proposals for peaceful negotiated settlement which foundered, and in mid-July 1977 we see an interesting development which Heder emphasizes and to which I shall eventually give further attention. The Eastern Zone administration issued instructions setting forth a decision to respond with coordinated assaults across the border if the Vietnamese committed any new aggression. “Kampuchean military units were not ordered to launch any unprovoked attacks” but only to respond to Vietnamese aggression.30 The wording of that document, assuming Heder has summarized it accurately, is very curious, in that response to aggression is an acknowledged right, not requiring any special justification, and that the real overt aggression up to that point had been from the Cambodian side, even though officially justified as response to Vietnamese threats. As I shall discuss below, the East Zone was probably issuing its own special covert message, both to the Vietnamese and to Phnom Penh.

From July to September 1977 the Vietnamese apparently really did violate Cambodian territory, in September the latter retaliated, and in December 1977 there was a major Vietnamese invasion following which conflict continued until the outbreak of a full-scale war at the end of 1978 with Vietnam calling for the overthrow of the DK government.31

There is thus ample evidence, in the impressionistic refugee reports from inside the country, in international press coverage, and in the detailed analyses of Heder, a competent foreign specialist in Cambodian affairs who is sympathetic to the DK position, that theCambodians were primarily responsible for the overt hostilities which led to war. Heder does not attempt to deny this, but says, "although the Kampucheans may have fired the first shots, they considered their actions a response to de facto Vietnamese aggression by long-term occupation of Kampuchean land."32

That is, since 1967 the Vietnamese had continued to hold territories still in dispute after Sihanouk's agreement of that year with the DRV and NLF. Much of Heder's three articles are devoted to the point that the Vietnamese had unilaterally recognized the Cambodian borders as they stood in 1967 and that "Kampuchea, and Kampuchea alone, had the right to ask for minor readjustments in the French delineation of the frontiers [which formed the map border agreed to in 1967] or to resolve any ambiguities that might exist in that delineation."33

Ambiguities there no doubt were - the line drawn on the map had not everywhere been laid out explicitly on the ground; and in some places distances as measured on the maps would not have corresponded to distances between the same points on the ground;34 but there is nothing in the published agreements giving Cambodia exclusive right to readjust such ambiguities in its favor.35

Sihanouk could well have claimed such exclusive privilege in his radio messages to his people; it would have been true to form, and he and his advisers might even have convinced themselves that they had a moral right to demand such privilege. For Sihanouk the claim might have been essential to his internal political maneuvers. He had, after all, in his agreement with the Vietnamese, renounced the so-called lost territories of Kampuchea Krom, taken by the Vietnamese before the arrival of the French, as well as other areas transferred from Cambodia to Vietnam by various French administrators;36 and those concessions could well have put him at odds with some of the ultra-nationalist fanatics of his entourage, such as Lon Nol. By convincing them that Cambodia still had an exclusive privilege to demand readjustments, he could argue that in the end they might outsmart the Vietnamese and even reopen discussion of Kampuchea Krom.

Whatever Cambodian sensitivities to border questions may have been,37 a unilateral claim to an exclusive privilege to readjust a border agreed to with another country can have no validity in international law, and military actions undertaken to enforce such claims are hostilities pure and simple. “International law” has been invoked ad nauseam in opposition to Vietnamese actions in 1979, but the initial Cambodian attacks in “disputed zones,” as Heder describes them, and even more the further attacks in areas clearly Vietnamese, were already violations, and they justified, in traditional international practice, a military response.

The war, then, which appears as the major factor undermining the undoubted progress made in the first year of the DK experiment as well as any further progress which might have been made, was due first of all to a peculiar hyper-chauvinism in the DK polity which inspired its leaders to take international law into their own hands. This same hyper-chauvinism was also, in connection with the war, responsible for many of the purges which tore the country apart internally, in that those purged were believed to be, and perhaps were, Cambodians sympathetic to the Vietnamese position.

The war also led directly to the next act in modern Cambodian history, the establishment of the Salvation Front government which has now become the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK). If almost everyone agrees that the destruction of DK was in some measure a humanitarian act, and even though it is easy to argue that Vietnamese military intervention was to some extent justifiable under international law and practice, the legitimacy of the regime which resulted from that intervention has been and still is strongly contested. It is therefore necessary, before describing Cambodia since 1979, to give some attention to the historical background of the new ruling group.38

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# Salvation Front - People’s Republic

## Historical background and genesis

In the western press the leaders of the PRK government have generally been characterized as political unknowns, Vietnamese puppets, in the words of Stephen Heder, “of embarrassingly low quality,” and "a handful of second and third echelon CPK defectors, Kampuchean expatriates who had lived in Hanoi for a quarter of a century, and unknown, token representatives of various sectors of pre-1975 Kampuchean society."39

Although there is a certain amount of objective truth in that characterization - none of the surviving first-echelon CPK people went over to the Salvation Front (SF) (or rather none of the potential pro-SF first-echelon people survived), they were joined by the remaining ‘Khmer Hanoi,’ and they did coopt various survivors of the pre-1975 elites - it reminds us very much of the Sihanouk-Lon Nol line toward their opponents between 1954 and 1975.

Then too, the revolutionaries were supposed to be political unknowns, including the ‘Khmer Hanoi,’ and mere puppets of Vietnam. Khieu Samphan, along with Hou Yuon and Hu Nim, the only widely known leftists, were considered dead from 1967 until after 1970; the names of Saloth Sar, Ieng Sary, Son Sen or Nuon Chea were not even made public until the end of 1971 and 1972 and were not in any case widely known; of the old Pracheachon group of pre-1960 communists, only Non Suon’s name was known outside specialist circles; and the remaining ‘first-echelon’ CPK people were almost

totally unknown, just as they are today. Thus Heder's description tells us nothing about their capabilities, political tendencies, or policies.

The doubt which surrounds the legitimacy of the PRK government requires that our discussion of it begin with examination of its genesis before going on to a description; and since the PRK group present themselves as a Cambodian communist alternative to the DK regime, the question of their origins involves the entire history of the Cambodian Communist Party.40

Organized Cambodian communism began in 1951 when the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) divided itself into three separate Vietnamese, Lao, and Cambodian organizations, all of which continued to cooperate in the armed struggle against the French. The precise name of the Cambodian organization seems to be uncertain.

According to some sources it was "Khmer People's Revolutionary Party," but one of their own documents of 1952 refers only to 'Nekhum Issarak Khmer' ("Khmer Freedom Front"). Of course that might have been different from the party; but it was under the leadership of Son Ngoc Minh, Tou Samouth, and Sieu Heng, who were the principal leaders of whatever organization then existed.41 A party history of September 1973 from the East Zone speaks of the "party" as existing from 1951, and takes September 30 of that year as the "opening of the first conference."42 Some students of the question argue, however, that it "was never formally constituted as a communist party," and with the name "Khmer People's Party" was "apparently designed as a preliminary to a communist party."43

However this may be, it was the sole Cambodian communist organization and was the nucleus out of which the future communist party would develop. Over the next two years a fair amount of territory came under revolutionary control, and in 1952 a "Government of National Resistance" was formed with Son Ngoc Minh as president.44

At the Geneva conference the Cambodian communists, unlike the Vietnamese and Lao, were denied a regroupment zone. The Pol Pot line holds that this was due to Vietnamese perfidy, ignoring that the true reason was the granting of complete formal independence to Cambodia in 1953, in advance of the rest of Indochina.45 This meant that Cambodia, unlike Laos or South Vietnam, had its own independent royal government delegation at Geneva which refused to countenance any special zones for the communists.

At most it can be said that the Russians, Chinese, and Vietnamese all considered it impractical to endanger the success of the conference by pressuring the extremely intransigent Cambodians.46 It was also expected, reasonably, that the left would have considerable success in the 1955 elections imposed on Cambodia by the Geneva Accords.47

What the conference required of Cambodia was adherence to the democratic constitution which already existed, formation of political parties, and free elections with participation of all before the end of 1955.

At that point, in 1954, the Cambodian communist organization, like the Vietnamese, ended their armed struggle. There may also have been a split over tactics for the coming political struggle, for many of their members left Cambodia for exile in Vietnam, following instructions from Tou Samouth; while others, ignoring those instructions, remained in Cambodia.48 Those who stayed behind, including Non Suon, and apparently under the leadership of Keo Meas, formed an open, legal organization called Krom Pracheachon ("Citizens' Group"), began publishing a newspaper, and prepared for the coming elections. Keo Meas seems to have led an at least semi-clandestine existence, and for the Cambodian public after 1954 Non Suon emerged as the de facto leader of the Pracheachon and therefore of the communists. In the 1955 elections 35 candidates were presented, and together with a few more names known as collaborators on the party newspapers, they constitute a group of 40 or so known publicly as Pracheachon communists.49

There were of course other clandestine cadres, and on their identity depends the answer to some of the questions about continuity from the organizations of the 1950s to the CPK of the 1970s. The East Zone document noted above claims that after Geneva a "temporary central committee… was set up," with Sieu Heng as secretary, and Tou Samouth, Son Ngoc Minh, So Vanna [So Phim], and N.T.Nh. as members; and it ignores the Pracheachon, indicating that the latter was only a legal front organization, not the party itself.50

Into that situation came a number of young radical intellectuals returning from study in France, first of all Saloth Sar (Pol Pot), Ieng Sary, Vorn Vet, Hou Yuon, and Khieu Samphan.

It is to them that Heder refers in his remark that between 1953 and 1959 the movement was invigorated by men not out of the ICP tradition.51 They indeed were not of the ICP tradition, but that they invigorated the old movement is not at all clear from the record.

None of them were ever mentioned in the Pracheachon newspapers as associated with that group, and those of the returned leftwing students who took an active, public role in political life in 1954-55, such as Thiounn Mum, Norodom Phurissara, and Keng Vannsak, tended to join the Democrat Party, while those who returned later, such as Hou Yuon and Khieu Samphan, joined Sihanouk's Sangkum. Of course, they may also, as implied in Saloth Sar/Pol Pot's public biographies, have been clandestine allies or members of either the Pracheachon or the real party.52 Non Suon wrote in his confessions that he had observed Saloth Sar, to whom he refers throughout only as "the present secretary of the central committee," helping Keo Meas plan the organization of the Pracheachon.

He also wrote, in another context, that Saloth Sar had joined the Democrat Party; and in a third document he is quoted as saying that he and his comrades in the Pracheachon, all of peasant or at least lower-class non-intellectual background, did not trust the returned students and were opposed to giving them important roles because of their middle-class and privileged backgrounds. He felt that

Cambodian communism should be in the hands of the poor peasants.

Because of pressures, both legal and illegal, by the Sihanouk government, the Pracheachon gradually declined. It presented only one candidate in the 1958 elections; and before the 1962 elections, in January, 12 minor members arrested in Kompong Cham for subversion named Non Suon as their leader, and he also was arrested and imprisoned until March 1970. Another important communist of similar background, Chou Chet, was arrested at about the same time; and whatever remained of either the Pracheachon or the ‘party’ went entirely underground.

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The latter, or its “temporary central committee,” which included Sieu Heng, Tou Samouth, Son Ngoc Minh, and So Phim,33 had been divided in 1956 into two sections, a rural committee under Sieu Heng and two others, and an urban committee headed by Tou Samouth with three other members, one of whom must certainly have been Keo Meas, and another possibly Non Suon. In the process of decline noted above, and under increasing government pressure, Sieu Heng began to betray the movement as carly as 1955 and in 1959 defected to the authorities.54

A reorganization was clearly in order, and in 1960 there was a meeting which in retrospect appears as one of the most controversial events in the history of Cambodian communism.

Non Suon, who attended, referred to it laconically as “the study meeting at the Railroad Station,” under Tou Samouth and “the present secretary”; but for the eventually dominant Pol Pot faction of DK, and Heder, it was the first, and founding, congress of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK).55 The East Zone history, in contrast, describes it as the party’s second congress, held on September 30, and the result the formation of the "Marxist-Leninist Party in Cambodia."56 An important point on which all these sources agree, however, is that Tou Samouth was named party secretary, which indicates a continuation, under whatever name or formal organizational framework, of the movement beginning in 1951 as well as the inclusion of its membership in whatever organization emerged from the 1960 meeting. Nuon Chea became Deputy Secretary and Saloth Sar the third politburo member, indicating that his faction at least of the returned students had by then joined with the men of the ICP tradition. Other members and candidate members of the new Central Committee were Ieng Sary, Keo Meas, Son Ngoc Minh, So Phim, Non Suon and two others, one of them a returned student.57

In 1962, besides the arrests mentioned above, Tou Samouth also disappeared, in July. The East Zone history says he was kidnapped without a trace “by the enemy.” It has usually been assumed that the enemy were Sihanouk’s police, but as Kiernan has noted, the

documents emanating' from the Pol Pot faction take an equivocal attitude toward Tou Samouth, and the identity of his "enemy" is not at all certain.38 In any case, another leadership reorganization was required. Mainstream DK history supported by Vietnamese informants claims that Saloth Sar/Pol Pot then became party secretary and has led the party ever since; the East Zone document merely notes a third congress in February 1963 without mentioning any names. According to the Vietnamese, Pol Pot indeed became Secretary-General, but a participant at the congress related that So Phim stood against him and was defeated "not by a vote but by opinion," suggesting some irregularity in the election, which may explain the East Zone (Phim's area) history's reticence on the matter.

In any case, the returned students, as a group, gained on the ICP veterans in the entire 12-man Central Committee, moving into positions 1, 3, 5, 6 and 11, with Ieng Sary, So Phim and Vorn Vet joining Pol Pot in the 5-man Politburo.59

Non Suon was then in prison and perhaps entirely unaware of what had happened - although that is unlikely - but it is strange that nowhere in his confessions does he refer to the disappearance of Tou Samouth, his own communist guru, or to the reorganization of 1963.

Later in 1963, between February and July, Saloth Sar, Ieng Sary, and Son Sen disappeared into the maquis.60 Almost no notice was taken of this in the press, and their names never appeared again until 1971 and 1972. Their movements and importance during those years are

extremely - difficult to determine;61 but for the Cambodian government and press the communists in the countryside were still 'Khmer-Vietminh,' 'Khmer Hanoi,' or 'Khmer Rouge' defined as supporters or puppets of Vietnam.

The same thing happened when more left-wing intellectuals disappeared in 1967. The best known, Khieu Samphan, Hou Yuon, and Hu Nim, were generally believed dead, and the only communists with whom the government seemed concerned were those linked to the old Pracheachon or the Vietminh. Few of the names mentioned in official communiques were known, but occasionally there was reference to one of the old men of the 1950s.

Shortly after the arrest of Non Suon and his colleagues, but before the disappearance of Tou Samouth, Sihanouk said in a speech that the Khmer-Vietminh had sent "the famous Setha (alias 'Samouth' … )" to Cambodia with a message for the Pracheachon.62 This led to speculation that Setha was Tou Samouth and that his visit to Cambodia might have been the occasion of his capture by the police,63 but in his confessions Non Suon lists Setha as a separate individual among the early communists, and the "alias Samouth" may have been a misapprehension of Sihanouk himself.

Five years later, reporting the arrest of 21 communists in Kompong Thom, the official news agency referred to them as 'Khmer Rouge'; and in a continuing story the following day assimilated them to the approximately 2,000 'Khmer-Vietminh' rebels believed operating in the country.64

Even more intriguing was a magazine article two years later which identified Tou Samouth as “president of the clandestine Khmer communist party who stayed somewhere in a zone to the northwest of Tay Ninh,” indicating that the Cambodian government ignored his disappearance in 1962 and would thus not have been guilty of it.65 Whoever was mistakenly identified as Tou Samouth, the factional affiliation of the group believed by the government to be the most important communists is clear from the names of his military deputy “Sovanna,” now known to be So Phim, and his political deputy “Nai-Saran,” a pseudonym of Men San/Achar Sieng, who had been a member of the National Central Executive Committee of the United Issarak Front, the political arm of the old organization of the 1950s,66 and a leader of the Pracheachon Group. This may indicate that in spite of the 1963 Central Committee election, the ICP veterans’ faction, led within the country by So Phim was still trying to maintain control of the apparatus. Nevertheless, Pol Pot, apparently accepted as party secretary, had in 1965-66 made secret visits to Hanoi and Peking.67

Shortly before the coup of 1970 there were vague hints in the press that Khieu Samphan and Hou Yuon might in fact be alive, but after the war began in earnest the Lon Nol government still emphasized, sometimes with mistaken facts, the role of the old Pracheachon and Khmer-Vietminh.68

Sihanouk, however, as soon as he was in exile, preferred to take Khieu Samphan, Hou Yuon, and Hu Nim as leaders of the resistance,

ignoring both the Pracheachon and the Saloth Sar group. The latter, beginning in late 1971, then imposed themselves on his FUNK, and they were all photographed together during his trip to Cambodia in 1973. In that same year two young Ministry of Education officials returned to Phnom Penh after six months in the communist maquis and revealed that Saloth Sar was indeed party secretary, but that some of the Pracheachon group, such as Non Suon and Chou Chet, were also still very important. Another important figure was Sok Thuok (Vorn Vet).69

For anyone who had attempted to study Khmer communism, the near total absence from FUNK information of any mention of the Pracheachon or 1950s communists was intriguing, and my own supposition at the time was that it simply indicated deference to Sihanouk's sensibilities. We now know that much more was involved.

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After the 1970 coup, over 1,000 of the Cambodian revolutionaries who had gone to Hanoi in 1954, including 822 party members, began returning to help in the struggle, but they soon found themselves the objects of extermination by some of the local communists.70

The latter, or at least one faction, had as early as 1971 decided that the Vietnamese could not be trusted and were potential enemies,

and by 1973 were perhaps putting out the word that the Vietnamese were the principal enemy.71

As a result the ‘Khmer Hanoi’ who survived went into hiding or returned to Vietnam.72

After victory in 1975 it was clear that the purge of cadres believed favorable to Vietnam had extended into the ranks of the Pracheachon group as well. In his confessions Non Suon mentions the anxiety he and his comrades felt at the mysterious disappearance of some of their old associates, in particular Keo Meas. Many of the Pracheachon men had still survived, however, and, like Non Suon, were holding responsible positions. Most of them were concentrated in the East, or in Damban 25, with Chou Chet holding the post of chief of the Western Zone.

The factional conflict, which had started with purges of communists too closely associated with Vietnam, became, after 1975, a conflict between the East and the Pol Pot faction of the central government, the latter supported by the Southwest. The special and often humane, efficient character of the East has been emphasized above; and since the leading cadres there were largely from the Pracheachon and older ICP tradition, the special character of their zone may well have been due to a conception of socialism closer to that of the Vietnamese.

Throughout 1975 'the ‘Eastern tendency’ seems to have held its own, and in the reorganization of the central government of April 1976

may nearly have carried the day.73 That interlude ended in October of the same year when Pol Pot seems to have consolidated his position, and over the next two years he instituted massive purges of his enemies throughout the country.

Most affected were the central government and the North, Northwest, and East Zones.

Thus when the Salvation Front emerged late in 1978 from the remnants of So Phim's rebellion, it did not include any of the first-echelon members of the old party veteran-Pracheachon tendency because they had all been purged. It did include some important second-echelon members, such as Mat Ly, Chea Sim, chief of Damban 20, and Heng Samrin himself. It should also be clear now that they represent party continuity from the earliest Cambodian communist organizations, in that sense are more legitimate than Pol Pot, and that the cooperation with Vietnam is an old tradition to which they are heir.

Their record in the East, where they generally prevailed until 1978, and during 1976, when they were influential in the central government, also indicates that their domestic policies were more humane, and if followed by the country as a whole might not have led to the same destruction of society achieved by Pol Pot's Democratic Kampuchea.

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## The PRK Regime: description

The government which in the western media has been conventionally labelled the ‘Heng Samrin Regime’ grew out of a group who met in Snuol, Kompong Cham province, on December 2, 1978, and formed the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation with a declaration of 11 broad objectives.74

They promised the destruction of all aspects of the DK apparatus and creation of a broad national unity. Certain basic rights - the right to return home, freedom of movement, opinion, association, belief, marriage, and family - were to be assured. Politically the country would be independent, democratic, and “progressing toward socialism”; and the economy was to be a mixture of planning and market with a bank and currency, no confiscation of food, development of both industry and agriculture, and encouragement of voluntary cooperative organizations. There was a promise to develop all levels of education while making proper use of intellectuals and technicians.

In foreign policy they undertook to seek good relations with all countries, first of all neighboring Southeast Asian nations, and to reinforce solidarity with revolutionary forces and progressives in the whole world.75 Since then there have been three stages of

reorganization, and the regime, at the top, groups people representing three broad political factions or tendencies.

At the original organizational meeting a Front Central Committee of 14 members was chosen. Five of them, including President Heng Samrin, Vice-President Chea Sim, and Hun Sen, were domestic communists who belonged to the East Zone faction but had not gone to Vietnam for training; three others, including Secretary-General Ros Samay, were of the Vietnam-trained group; and three more were 'new' people with no previous revolutionary or communist experience.76

The new government, the Revolutionary Peoples' Council, which was revealed to the public after the occupation of Phnom Penh on January 7, 1979, was chosen only in part from the Front Central Committee. Heng Samrin was still President of the Council, but Chea Sim became Interior Minister in the latter while Pen Sovan, a Vietnam-trained communist, was named Vice-President of the government as well as Minister of Defense and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. Two other old communists not in the Front Committee were Information Minister Keo Chanda and Minister of the Economy Mok Sakun.

In contrast to the Front and Council, where the three groups were in nearly equal number, the Kampuchean Revolutionary People's Party (KRPP) was dominated by the Vietnam-trained people, with Pen Sovan as Secretary-General; and his government positions could not

help but give the impression that the Vietnam veterans, even if in the background, would hold a major share of real power.

When the second Front Congress was held on September 29-30, 1979, its Central Committee was increased to 35. The three top posts were still held by East Zone men, Heng Samrin, Chea Sim, and Mat Ly; and their group increased its number from 5 to 9, with the Khmer-Vietnam group growing from 4 to 7. There were also 4 old domestic communists who had broken with Pol Pot before 1975; but the biggest change was in the number of 'new' non-revolutionary people, up from 3 to 15. This last group also increased its share in the government over the next two years, acquiring certain ministerial and executive posts at the expense of one or another of the communist factions.77

Most of their gains came with the government reorganization following the June 24-27 session of the new National Assembly which resulted from the election of May 1, 1981. In that reorganization the rather ad hoc Revolutionary Peoples' Council was replaced by a seven-member executive organ, the State Council, and a 17-member ministerial cabinet, with Heng Samrin president of the first and Pen Sovan president of the second. Chea Sim, the former number two man of the Front and Interior Minister under the Revolutionary Peoples' Council, was given the less important post of President of the National Assembly while his Interior Ministry post went to Vietnam-trained Khang Sarin.

Another change following the formation of the new government was to rename the Front ‘Front for National Construction,’ since salvation had been achieved and the main task henceforth was construction. From early in their existence, the issue of Vietnamese control was important to any assessment of the Front and its government; and it was indeed the touchstone of all anti-regime arguments. Some observers seemed to think that the government and party could not help but be Hanoi-dominated, and in some quarters attention was fixed on Pen Sovan, with reference made, invidiously, to the 'Pen Sovan Regime.'78

All such value judgments aside, it is perfectly legitimate to take interest in the balance among the factions and whether, for instance, the new Cambodian government is to be dominated by men who served Pol Pot until 1978, or by those who were outside, or opposed to, that regime from earlier on.

By mid-1981 the most careful and objective analysis, based on shifts in the leadership group, seemed to point to a slight decrease in the power of the 1978 East Zone defectors and to indicate that in any factional infighting there would be an alliance of the Vietnam-trained, the non-Pol Pot domestic communists, and perhaps the ‘new’ people, against the former Pol Pot men.

Then, however, the sudden replacement of Pen Sovan by Heng Samrin as party secretary, announced on December 5, 1981, called all such analyses into question, and it could indicate that the factions as delineated above are not so important as believed.79

It is important in trying to determine what this new Cambodian government has achieved to notice that its history, even more than the story of its predecessor, warrants attention for the way the facts have been used, as much as for the facts themselves. A general description is much easier than in the former case, the facts being much easier to collect and check than before because of the vast number of informants, the greater openness of the regime, and the increased facility for on-the-spot observation. In addition, the refugees, who still provided most of the information in 1979 and 1980, had much more recent experience with the PRK regime, and their stories were less subject to involuntary inaccuracy due to lapse of time.

The refugees, however, are in a strict sense fleeing from the PRK, not Democratic Kampuchea, and their attitude to the former, just as to the latter, is almost entirely negative. Although most of them grudgingly admit that the new regime has not carried out any massacres - in fact it is hard to find even an authentic story of an individual execution after the elimination of local DK cadre in 1979 - they often say that killings are certain to come, since the ‘other communists’ were also easygoing in the beginning, up to 1977, which casts an interesting light on some of their stories of 1975-79. Without physical brutality to relate, they search out any other negative aspect of the general situation which they can find, and retail it as evidence of communist or Vietnamese perfidy.

In the final analysis it is clear that they simply refuse to live with socialism, or with Vietnamese, no matter how benign the regime; and they are also afraid that the new communists, like the old, may turn brutal after a relatively tolerable beginning.

Such at least is the attitude of the bourgeois refugees who are in the majority. The peasants obviously have different feelings, since few of them have come out as refugees, and some of those who did - a couple of thousand in July 1980 - have gone back. Moreover, the peasants who came to Nong Chan for rice in 1979-81 stated that they had no complaints about Vietnamese behavior or the new regime as such except the lack of rice supplies.

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As an introduction to the refugees' description of the PRK regime, we may usefully take the report which Seng Chen An wrote of his peregrinations between January 6 and November 23, 1979, at which later date he crossed into Thailand to become a refugee. Chen An, we will recall, was the Lon Nol official who returned to Cambodia in 1976 in the hope of rejoining his children.80 With that background, and given his remarks on his DK experiences, we may assume him to have been a strong anti-communist; and his written report concludes: "for the future of Cambodia I can conceive of nothing but a political settlement supported by the great powers," refugee code

for a U.S.- led enforced reestablishment of the status quo ante-bellum 1970.

In January 1979 Chen An and his wife were in Phnom Penh, at the Boeung Trabek center for returnees, when, on the 6th of the month leng Sary's nephew told them all to prepare for evacuation from the invading Vietnamese. The next day they were taken by train to the middle of Kompong Chhnang province, where they were placed in an ordinary cooperative to help with the rice harvest. For the first time they were under the orders of ordinary cadres, and for the first time they heard of the extensive killings which had taken place over the previous years. After 20 days there, the Vietnamese attacked and they were forced to hide in the forest for a month, stealing rice at night from cooperatives taken over by the enemy. Then, along with DK cadres and base peasants, they moved on by foot through Amleang and Pursat province to Koh Krala in Battambang; and there, as mentioned above, they saw thousands of surviving East Zone evacuees starting their trek homeward.

When the Vietnamese eventually reached Koh Krala, Chen An's group turned back toward Pursat, and near Leach, in April, the DK cadres informed them that the organization could no longer take care of them and they were free to go wherever they wished. The bourgeois evacuees of course preferred to return to the towns, and Chen An set off with a group of 50 toward the main highway running between Battambang and Phnom Penh. They lived by stealing food, met Vietnamese troops who did not bother them, and proceeded northward through Battambang and Sisophon to the Thai border.

In May, with a group of 17 of his and his wife's relatives, whose appearance is unexplained, Chen An reached Nong Chan, just in time to be caught in the forced repatriation back over the mountains of Preah Vihear in June.81

Unfortunately he provided no details of that journey, but by early July he and his group of relatives had reached Kompong Thom, where his wife had to be hospitalized for a week with bronchitis. Working in the hospital was an old friend, wife of a Public Works Department employee in Kompong Thom, who told Chen An that his mother, presumed dead, was still alive and in Phnom Penh. Another old friend and former classmate of Chen An turned out to be the new governor of Kompong Thom, and he helped them get transportation on a truck toward the capital. At the river port of Prek Kdam, where they had to leave the truck and cross by boat, they went to a house to ask for food and found it occupied by a relative, a former teacher, who told them that their four children, also presumed dead, were alive in Takeo, south of Phnom Penh.

Near the end of July they reached Phnom Penh on foot, rested at the house of relatives who had survived to return home, then borrowed bicycles for a two-day trip to the village in Takeo province where Chen An's mother and children were living. He apparently found them in good health, since there is no mention of the contrary, and when he set out again for Phnom Penh with the children, his mother preferred to stay behind where she was.

Chen An himself, however, came down with a fever, and had to spend two months in the Calmette hospital in Phnom Penh, the country's best medical center.

Finally, on November 19, the family group of 19 people left Phnom Penh by truck, "disguised as Cambodian refugees returning home … [in] a convoy of [Vietnamese] trucks reserved for that purpose"; and "our trip was therefore, happily, free." The truck convoy deposited them in Battambang, where he met still another surviving old friend, a Public Works official, who put them up for two days until they made arrangements to continue on to the border, a trip which was apparently completed without incident.

Seng Chen An's account is typical of the bourgeois refugee stories of SF Cambodia in 1979. As soon as he was free from the DK administration, he was able to move all over the country at will, apparently had no serious difficulty with food supplies, met many old friends and his entire family (only this is untypical), received medical care when needed, including two months in the country's best facilities, and finally obtained free transport from the Vietnamese for his second flight toward the border. Yet in spite of the return of humanity to Cambodia under Vietnamese aegis, which Chen An partly admits, and the facilities accorded him personally, Chen An still found it impossible to live in Cambodia because of Vietnamese communism and alleged lack of liberty. In his words, "the Vietnamese are clever; they are subtle in the art of ruining morale so that one must finally leave them; of course, they do not mistreat the Khmer like the Pol Pots, but they seriously bother them."

As examples of the Vietnamese harassment which made life in Cambodia unbearable (in spite of freedom of movement, medical care, and free transportation), Seng Chen An managed to dredge up three incidents of alleged mistreatment, as follows:

(1) In September 1979, 20 truckloads of people from Takhmau, a short distance south of Phnom Penh, were taken to Phnom Baset, a short distance to the northwest, and left there. When they returned to the city, they found their houses empty and all their possessions confiscated.

(2) In October the same thing happened to 30 truckloads of people from Chbar Ampeou, a suburb southeast of the city.

(3) Some of the refugees, forcibly repatriated by the Thai in June, had been allowed to live in a school building in Sisophon, 30 miles from the border, and were fed by the Vietnamese. Then the Vietnamese persuaded them to move out to nearby villages, promising to continue the supply of free food.

The people moved, but then received no help and returned to Sisophon.

These incidents, apparently the worst Seng Chen An could think of, are a far cry from the horrors of the previous regime, and the details are so obscure that we do not know what really occurred, or even whether they are based on wild rumors. Even assuming the facts as

reported to have been true - and since the Takhmau incident at least appears in other refugee accounts, something of the sort must have happened - we need to know more of the circumstances in order to make an assessment. Were the people near Phnom Penh trying to illegally occupy houses not their own? Were they engaging in illegal business which hindered the reorganization of the capital? Had they refused to work at all? This was at a time, we must remember, when the country was precariously trying to recover and when free resettlement in Phnom Penh for those without recognized employment was explicitly, and understandably, forbidden. In any case, no one claims that the incidents involved physical abuse, and even if they are entirely true, such stories are few and seem to represent atypical aberrations in the general picture of 1979.

As for the story of refugees in Sisophon, they had fled the country once, been returned, and were still left free to proceed halfway across the country from Kompong Thom to Sisophon, where their only purpose was obviously to escape again. Yet the authorities had not hindered their movement, gave them food, and only harassed them to the extent of trying to get them to settle in villages, presumably to help grow food. Such hardly justified the call for foreign intervention with which Seng Chen An concluded his report.

Some of the other refugees, mostly those who had come out in 1979 and had been sitting for months in KID, claimed knowledge of worse actions by the new authorities, particularly in a small number of written reports prepared for circulation to the international aid community and foreign intelligence organizations. They also

damaged their own credibility with a number of allegations which were either absurd or petty, such as the claim that Khmer radio speakers were forced to adopt a Vietnamese accent, or that Vietnamese personnel now had permission to marry Khmer women (which was not contrary to the mores of prewar Cambodia, where there were no racial restrictions on marriage).82 One teacher, typifying the attitudes I described above, said his own disillusionment with the new regime came when he saw Chan Ven, Minister of Education, preparing fertilizer for his personal vegetable garden.83

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More seriously, one written statement prepared in May 1980 by a man who had recently arrived at KID, along with the standard and undoubtedly true complaints that salaries were low, life difficult, and foreign aid still insufficient, alleged that in Phnom Penh there were daily arrests of both government employees and ordinary people on charges of working for Pol Pot or the CIA. Another serious charge, with respect to Vietnamese intentions, was that the latter had forced the introduction of Vietnamese language courses into Cambodian schools over the objection of Khmer education committees.84

Sok Yieng, whose interesting background was noted earlier, was given a position in the new Ministry of Information and Press as

soon as he returned to Phnom Penh, and he fled in December 1979, like Seng Chen An with a large family group of 12 persons including small children. He too wrote that the Vietnamese were trying to impose not only their language but also the entire Vietnamese school syllabus from primary grades up to university; and he predicted that their plans would prevail despite opposition by Khmer education personnel.

His report also contained the names of half a dozen people arrested by the new government, but in most cases without indicating the nature of their alleged offenses, and his attitude seemed to be that all Khmer should be immune from arrest by the PRK for whatever reason.

One case in which he did offer a reason for the arrest was that of a journalist who had refused to carry out Vietnamese orders to engage in “autogecide” [sic], probably meaning ‘autogenocide,’ or the alleged Vietnamese intention to induce the Cambodians to racial suicide by subtle, insidious, non-violent means. Another of Sok Yieng’s examples which is worthy of more serious attention was the situation of Mok Sakun, first Minister of Economy, reported to have died in Vietnam in March 1979 while undergoing medical treatment, which for Sok Yieng meant that he had probably been murdered. The presumed reason for his political murder would have been, according to Yieng, his opposition to the Vietnamese insistence on using their own currency, the dong, in the entire ‘Indochinese Federation.’ Whatever the cause of Mok Sakun’s death - on April 9, in Phnom Penh, reportedly after a long illness85 - we now know that there was

probably never a Vietnamese plan to impose the dong throughout Indochina, and that in early 1980 a new riel displaced it in Cambodia.86

The stories of atrocities - arbitrary arrest and killing of intellectuals - were kept circulating in the refugee centers by people who had already been outside Cambodia for months,87 and one man who had been very active in preparing and circulating the written reports summed up his own with, "part of the Khmer population have become refugees abroad and the majority of the Khmer who still remain in their country are threatened with death by famine and by the policy of racial extermination of the PAVN."88

A few people, including one of the more perspicacious postwar intellectual returnees, were even trying to convince themselves that the Tuol Sleng prison was the work of the Vietnamese.

Perhaps the most eye-catching stories came out of the Khmer Serei border camps and from that channel found their way into the international press.89 Even the most respectable of the Khmer Serei, Son Sann's KPNLF, could not resist claiming that the Vietnamese had stolen all the gold from the National Bank (ignoring that the bank had first been plundered by departing Lon Nol officials and then dynamited during DK times) and all the treasures in various temples of Phnom Penh (interesting to juxtapose with earlier claims about DK violence to temples), and that they had imposed their dong on Cambodia in order to buy up cheaply all the valuable goods still in private hands. Their comment on the new riel, just being introduced,

was that it was a Hanoi device to buy up Khmer rice with worthless paper; and the bulletin concluded that "it is worse than with the Khmer Rouge."90

Six months later Son Sann was still trying to shock world opinion with claims that Cambodian women were forced to marry Vietnamese just to get food, that the Vietnamese were plundering Angkor Wat, and that "the Kampuchean people will be ‘wiped out’ in 10 years unless the Vietnamese leave."91

Even a very careful and honest journalist could be induced to uncritically report such stories as probable facts.

Late in 1979 William Shawcross obtained from Francois Ponchaud, and publicized, a number of anti-SF accusations which originated in the Khmer Serei border camps. Some of them, relating to corruption or mismanagement in distribution of aid, may have been based on true incidents, but were presented as the general situation.

Four different reports alleged that the Vietnamese prevented people from harvesting their own rice, sometimes mining the fields, even shooting the farmers, and claiming that the rice belonged to Vietnam. Another story alleged that the Vietnamese had distributed food by day and then taken it away at gunpoint by night; and there was a prediction of generalized famine, with next year (1980) being the end of Cambodia. One more serious charge was that men between 15 and 40 were being drafted and sent to fight on the

Sino-Vietnamese border replacing the Vietnamese soldiers sent to Cambodia.

Two of the rumors seem contradicted by Seng Chen An's information noted above: a serious famine and Vietnamese obstacles in the way of people searching for food in Takeo (where Chen An's mother had preferred to stay rather than follow her son to Thailand), and the allegation that the Vietnamese gave no medical help and only sold medicine for gold (note the treatment of Chen An and his wife in the hospitals of Kompong Thom and Phnom Penh). Ponchaud himself added "the charge that the Vietnamese are now conducting a subtle 'genocide' in Cambodia."92

Shawcross of course noted that Ponchaud covered his rear by warning that "the provenance of these reports [Khmer Serei] should be remembered when they are assessed," but he nevertheless considered them worthy of dissemination since "then [1976] as now his [Ponchaud's] information was at first decried and it is well to remember that his early accounts … . proved largely correct." Shawcross also felt justified in making the astonishing statement that "when one considers the history of recent centuries there is scant reason to suppose that the Vietnamese would now behave very differently from the way that Ponchaud's correspondents describe."93

Let us now turn to a more detailed and analytical examination of available evidence, both firsthand and published, in order to assess

the accuracy of the above and the general condition of Cambodia from January 1979 to the present.

There are four principal types of sources for the history of Cambodia in 1979-81:

(1) former bourgeoisie like Seng Chen An who drifted around during part of 1979 before coming to the border,

(2) former bourgeoisie who accepted employment for a longer or shorter time with the new regime before defecting,

(3) peasants still living in Cambodia who could be contacted when they came to the border for rice, and

(4) people still working for the new regime or living by private employment in the towns.94 Not having visited Cambodia in 1979-80, my own contacts then were of necessity limited to the first three groups.

In the peasants who still live in Cambodia with no thought of leaving we have a source entirely unavailable during the DK years. To be sure, those who come to the border are nearly all from the Northwest, and mostly from Battambang, the only areas within a practicable distance on foot or by ox-cart. Thus the information they provide may be areally skewed, but some allowance for that may be made by recalling that the Northwest generally suffered more than the rest of the country during 1975-79.

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My first contact with such peasants was in May 1980, and thereafter I managed to talk to them every couple of weeks during June, July, and September.

On each occasion I asked them general questions about life in their districts, Vietnamese involvement, oppression, food supply, restoration of schools and temples, etc .; and the answers were nearly always consistent and identical.

They had not liked the DK regime (an expected, and in their eyes certainly a politically necessary answer, the objective truth of which in any particular case cannot be assessed) and much preferred the new government, first of all for the personal freedom it allowed and the absence of physical oppression. The second part of their response, in the general way I have just put it, may be accepted at face value since it was not at all politically necessary, and as a volunteered positive assessment of the PRK regime was contrary to the conventional wisdom of the refugee organizations and to the official position of the Khmer officials of Nong Chan.

Furthermore, the peasants had no specific complaints about the Vietnamese in Cambodia (although they would of course prefer in

general that the Vietnamese not be there), and they did not consider the extent of Vietnamese administrative intervention at their level (hamlet, village) to be in any way oppressive. The officials they dealt with were all Khmer, and the Vietnamese troops they encountered did not bother them. They all realized that at district (srok) and province levels there was more direct Vietnamese involvement in administration, but as peasants this did not touch them directly. Most of them did not even know the names of the Khmer srok or province chiefs. Under persistent questioning, they continually affirmed that they had no complaints about the general conduct of the new authorities or about administrative impingement on peasant life.

On certain specific points they found present conditions unsatisfactory.

First, there was a lack of rice, for which they blamed insufficient rainfall during the previous season and in some places - depending on when any given district settled down after the war of early 1979 - on delayed planting or lack of seed. They did not, in general, attribute the shortfall in the crop to any deficiency of the new government.

They did, however, blame the government for not distributing the large quantities of international aid rice which was supposed to have been received; and, of course, their reason for coming to the border was to pick up the rice available there. How did those peasants, who did not even know what was going on in the administration of nearby district towns, know of what Phnom Penh had supposedly received

for distribution? Why, through Voice of America broadcasts first of all, and then by word-of-mouth either at the border or from people who had visited Phnom Penh.

On their trips to the border to pick up rice, the authorities, they said, represented in this case by the Vietnamese military, disapproved, and in contrast to the rest of the country where freedom of movement prevailed, roadblocks were set up and efforts were made to stop traffic between the border and the interior. The peasants considered those efforts, however, to be ineffective, and it was easy to go around the roadblocks on smaller trails. When on occasion they were actually caught by soldiers, they were often let off with a small bribe, or simply blocked from continuing. They would then pretend to retreat until an alternative route was found. On very rare occasions there were cases of carts or animals confiscated. The peasants were unanimous, though, until late September 1980, that force was not used by Vietnamese soldiers, and that once they had reached Nong Chan and loaded up with rice they were not bothered by the authorities on their return.

The real physical danger was from bandits, Thai or Khmer, both on the way to the border and on return; and the last group to whom I spoke, in September, said that PRK Cambodian soldiers, replacing the Vietnamese, were harsher, more threatening, and had begun to fire shots in the direction of people who persisted in going to the border.

Thus far no one had been killed, and it seemed that the shots had been intended to frighten rather than harm.

The increased pressure on the ‘land bridge’ came at a time when the international aid organizations were beginning to suspect that much of the rice picked up at the border was not needed for immediate consumption, but was being traded, perhaps even back to Thai border villagers.95 It is also noteworthy that the peasants who came to the border seemed to be adequately fed; at least they did not show signs of starvation.

Another general complaint of the peasants was shortage of tools and draught animals resulting from DK mismanagement followed by war; and some of them spoke of the necessity for cooperative agricultural organization in order to spread the existing means of production around. This came up in my first contact in May 1980, and in repeated and persistent questioning the informant insisted that farmers were voluntarily pooling their resources as the only way to accomplish the necessary work.

The relatively positive assessment of the regime by peasants, reinforced by the bourgeois refugees’ stories of freedom of movement and lack of physical abuse (whatever other complaints they made), generally concurred with conclusions drawn by Ben Kiernan about the first four months of 1979 from interviews with entirely different groups of refugees;96 and the convergence argued favorably for the picture each of us seemed to discern.

I was therefore astonished in July 1980 when I received Stephen Heder's Kampuchean Occupation and Resistance to find quite a different picture.97

This study presents a scenario which begins with a misapprehension on the part of the 'new' people about the nature of the Heng Samrin Salvation Front. First, according to Heder, the Vietnamese and their Salvation Front had promised a counter-revolution. But then, between December 3, 1978 when the formation of the new movement was announced by Hanoi radio and December 25 when the invasion began, Cambodians had little time "to identify and understand the Front's character and program";98 and they "imputed into the advancing, but as yet unknown Front, totally unrealistic visions of what it represented and what it was likely to do."99 There is obviously a contradiction here as to whether the Vietnamese promised a counter-revolution, or it was merely imputed to them by the Cambodians.

Heder continues, saying that, inured to DK lies, the 'new' people ignored their allegations that the Salvation Front was a Vietnamese creation.

Instead they imagined that the Front's promises, which they heard over "what purported to be Phnom Penh radio," without being aware of the Vietnamese involvement, about "the restoration of schools, religion, liberty, justice, money, telephones, freedom of movement and … cities," meant that the "liberation force was some kind of Khmer Serei (Free Khmer), or Khmer Sar (white Khmer) [right-wing]

organization dedicated to the establishment of a regime of free market economy and bourgeois political freedom."100

Now right here we need to interject some comment and query. What ‘new’ people heard anything at all about the Front from its own sources in December 1978?

There is complete unanimity in refugee stories that they had no radios at all; and although some of them did get bits of radio news from friendly cadres, there was no way in December 1978 of confusing Hanoi radio with the Phnom Penh radio which was still functioning in DK hands.

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Furthermore, as we have seen above, the people close to the border in the East and Southwest had known perfectly well what was going on since 1976-77, and whatever their other illusions, they would have had no doubt about the Front’s Vietnamese connections. Farther back from the border in those two zones, and in Phnom Penh, the DK administration simply announced an approaching war with Vietnam, there was no news of the Front, and no one had any reason to doubt the reality of the conflict. Up in the Northwest there was usually no advance warning, and the first news of the war was the sound of gunfire followed by a Vietnamese attack. There some people did

imagine Khmer Serei or Khmer Sar liberation, since such had long been rumored,101 but there was no knowledge of any ‘Front program’ and they soon saw that the attacking troops were Vietnamese.

As for the specific promises of the Salvation Front cited by Heder, they soon, except for the gratuitously imputed ‘counter-revolution,’ proved to be true; and even now, four years later, are still, and increasingly, true.

If there was deception about the SF with respect to counter-revolution, meaning a complete return to pre-1975 or pre-1970 Cambodia, it was self-deception, and not due to SF propaganda or ignorance of Vietnamese involvement.

But discussions of the SF-PRK can come later. I brought Heder in at this point because of the great contrast between his information and what I had heard from peasants in Nong Chan and bourgeois refugees in KID about their life in 1979-80. In the chapter from which I have quoted, Heder confused the issue by grouping both former urbanites and peasants as ‘new’ people reacting similarly to the change of regime. The real ‘new’ people, however, were only the urbanites, while the pre-1975 peasants, even if not truly base people, could easily be assimilated to them or at least were at ease with the demands of agricultural production.

One wonders who it was who “dreamed [of] … rural counter-revolution” or whose “visions of a return to private farming …

were smashed" by the SF efforts at rural reorganization.102 Elsewhere Heder has argued that peasants were generally satisfied with, or at least could tolerate, DK collectivization;103 and those who found it oppressive should have been happy with the new PRK system which, if not absolutely free, moved very far in that direction in comparison with DK. Heder's remarks about disillusionment do not fit the 'new' former urbanites, who wanted nothing more than to get entirely away from farming and return to the cities, and they seem applicable only to the very small class of former rural landlords or rich peasants, in numbers important only in the Northwest, and not a group for whom we would expect Heder to feel much sympathy.

The question of freedom of movement, which the Front promised, is of more general relevance; and the peasants I met at Nong Chan claimed that it was real, except in the border zones.104 Heder admits that immediately after the overthrow of DK "it became possible to travel without passes," and for the first month travel was easy. Later, in July, when the refugees forcibly repatriated over Preah Vihear by the Thai reached Kompong Thom, they needed passes to proceed farther, since it was "now much more difficult to travel," although we have seen that one group at least had no problem.105

Whatever 'more difficult' means, in another passage, following a description of insecurity in May, June, and July, Heder notes that "meanwhile perhaps as much as half of the Kampuchean population in the Vietnamese zone of control was on the move," and "most of this travel meant movement along main roads and through towns." It

was only after late May that it began to slow down as a result of several factors, one of which was “the tightening of Vietnamese restrictions.” Nevertheless, toward the end of the year, in the face of a food shortage, people again moved toward the main roads and towns, but suffered “constant harassment” because "such movement was technically illegal."106

The harassment, according to Heder, included, as people got close to the border, minefields laid out by the Vietnamese and in October indiscriminate shooting with small arms, mortars, even artillery; and in a passage worthy of Barron and Paul, he asserts that, “as the mortar shells screamed down on refugees trekking … toward the tantalizingly close border … the Vietnamese had proven themselves capable of killing innocent civilians whose only desire was to find enough rice to stave off starvation.” The last bit of Vietnamese innocence, that they didn’t kill people like Pol Pot did, "was suddenly and, probably definitively lost."107

Another example of Vietnamese oppression alleged by Heder was an attempt to re-evacuate the towns. “It was the Vietnamese plan for the cities that meant the ultimate alienation of most urban people.” “In February and March 1979 the Vietnamese began to attempt a step by step evacuation of the market towns. What the Khmer Rouge had done in 24 or 48 or 72 hours, they would do over a period of several months.” It confirmed that “the Vietnamese and their Khmer allies, although not so crude and violent as their predecessors, had the same communist goals,” one of which was "this second deurbanization of Kampuchea."108

Well, if such were the Vietnamese intentions, they were not implemented, for we know that the towns were not evacuated; and so much is clear even from Heder, who later on writes that “September brought a new wave of attempts at eviction,” with "Vietnamese and Salvation Front cadres and armed forces … loading people on trucks for yet another de-urbanization attempt."109

An attempt which again failed, since the towns have continued to grow. Either the supposediy ruthless and efficient Vietnamese suddenly lost their will and competence, or Heder’s stories contain a large component drawn from the refugee rumor mill.

After reading Heder’s study, with its attention to derogatory information about the SF regime which I had not heard, I decided to recheck my sources, the bourgeois refugees of KID, about their experiences in 1979-80 (it was already clear from the peasants at Nong Chan that they were not harassed by the authorities and that efforts to keep them away from the border were half-hearted and ineffective).

The points on which specific information was needed were (1) freedom of movement, (2) re-evacuation of towns, and (3) violence against people going toward the border; and I was unable to find any stories among people I met which substantiated Heder’s report.

At various times the SF/Vietnamese authorities had attempted to institute passes for travel around the country, but the pass system

was either unenforced or the passes were so easy to obtain as to be virtually meaningless.

It is particularly tendentious to talk of a tightening of travel restrictions just as the Preah Vihear repatriates arrived in Kompong Thom, since there is complete agreement among those people that after their harrowing experiences they were well-received by Vietnamese troops, taken to Kompong Thom, and then given further travel facilities to wherever they wished to go, which for some meant return to Sisophon to wait for the auspicious moment to attempt another border crossing.110

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Many of the KID refugees had in 1979 returned to Phnom Penh before coming out to Thailand between May 1979 and mid-1980 when I talked to them, and they all agreed on the ease with which that trip could be made.

Not only in early 1979, when Heder also agrees that there was complete freedom of movement, but even as late as November 1979, as Seng Chen An reported, free transportation was sometimes still provided; and such transportation, as well as passes, when required, were supplied to anyone claiming his trip was in order to effect a family reunion.

Even when travel was not officially provided, it was easy to go from Phnom Penh to Battambang by daily train (generally free), or on the frequent truck convoys where some payment to the drivers was required; and if such passengers were ever challenged en route, it was sufficient to say they were looking for relatives in one of the northern towns. This de facto freedom, whatever regulations may theoretically have been promulgated, was one of the reasons why the magnet effect of KID remained active all through 1980; and the bourgeois refugees who kept leaving PRK employment to flee abroad, in spite of their desire to place the regime in an unfavorable light, rarely complained about physical difficulties in moving once they had decided to flee.

In two more studies, based on research up to April and August 1980, Heder is in rather close agreement with the situation I have inferred from my informants. In a section devoted to the pass-issuing authority of village committees, he says, “it is possible to travel without a pass, and indeed the majority of travellers risk travel without them.” In any case, “it seems that most village committees are willing to issue passes more or less on request,” and from the putative “point of view of the higher level authorities … the majority of village committees are too lax.” Of course, as all informants agree, one place to which passes are not issued is the Thai border, yet it was not difficult to reach it, and Heder provides an explanation in that “villagers have the right to engage in extra-village travel and activities in order to augment and supplement their collectively produced income and their private plot production, so their trips to the Thai

border, although technically illegal, are compatible with the rights generally accorded to villagers." Later on, in mid-1980, in spite of "a general slight nationwide tightening-up on circulation," the measures "which were not draconian to begin with and were not very strictly enforced … seem to have had little effect." By August, "village committee willingness to issue passes" and "extra-village travel" were nearly the same as before the tightening.111

The KID refugees were even more emphatic, and visibly surprised, in their responses to questions about PRK/Vietnamese plans for a second evacuation of urban areas.

They had never heard of any such thing; and when I specifically referred to Heder's dates they could recall nothing that appeared to them as such a plan. To be sure, the new authorities had tried to restrict settlement in the towns to people with real employment, and for obviously good reasons. If the entire 600,000 prewar population of Phnom Penh, let alone the more than 2 million of 1975, had flowed back in early 1979, most of them would have starved to death even in the best of possible circumstances.

Many of the surviving urbanites, however, were people of sufficient education or training to have been offered jobs by the new regime and thus officially allowed residence in the towns; and if they refused employment and imagined that in such a situation of national emergency they should have been allowed to remain parasitically in Phnom Penh, their complaints about urban residence restrictions are

not worth serious consideration. In general, though, they do not make such complaints.

Just as with travel passes, enforcement of urban residence requirements was lax enough that most former urbanites, even if not working for the government, were able to stay in Phnom Penh or its suburbs, engaged in petty trade, until they decided to head for the Thai border.

Although denying any government plan to evacuate the towns again, some of the refugees recall that when it was time for rice planting in April and May, people were urged, and sometimes even required, to go out to the fields, plant rice, and then return; and this was also true for some state employees, such as factory workers, who were taken out to plant rice as part of their assigned work duties. Everyone knew, however, that this was a temporary expedient, not permanent exile. It is possible, however, that news of this expedient passed along the rumor chain and, magnified in the Khmer Serei and DK border camps where Heder worked, had been turned into a second urban evacuation.

Only one incident of an apparently true effort at permanent evacuation came to my attention, and it seems to be a second report of one of Seng Chen An's stories. A young man who had attended high school in Phnom Penh in 1979-80 before fleeing to the border said that he had heard of one incident in which about 20 truckloads of Chinese together with a few rich Khmer had been sent permanently out of the city, perhaps to Takeo. H.N. thought some

Chinese had been moved to Kampot in September 1979, but denied that there had been any forced exodus of Khmer after January 1979.112

As for minefields on the road to the border and Heder's "mortar shells scream[ing] down on refugees," this seems to be at the very least gross exaggeration of an isolated incident or two. Minefields, of course, there were:

laid by DK in 1975-79, possibly by Sihanouk-Lon Nol forces before 1975, by Thai military at various times, and perhaps in fact even by Vietnamese-PRK troops; and there were casualties. But in 1979-80 trails through the minefields to the border had long been cleared - if only to permit the large-scale trading into Cambodia which provided support for the Khmer Serei -

and the refugees, both bourgeois and peasants, were virtually unanimous that the threat of violence on their way to the border came not from PRK/Vietnamese troops, but from DK forces, Khmer Serei, Thai, and 'bandits' who might be any of the above 'off-duty,' or from other Thai or Khmer 'private entrepreneurs,' and even a few rogue Vietnamese.

Only once in 1979 had there been clear evidence of refugees apparently fired on by PRK/Vietnamese forces. At the end of October 1979 a correspondent for the Far Eastern Economic Review found a woman who had been wounded "during a mortar attack on a civilian column north of Sisophon," and a man who "said he also came under

Vietnamese small-arms fire" between Battambang and Phum Thmei.113 The same two people were mentioned in the Review's story the following week, the woman again as a victim of Vietnamese fire, but the man was cited for different information and his story of Vietnamese shooting at civilians was not repeated.114 Asiaweek, which by late 1979 was even more eager than the Review to propagate anti-Vietnamese stories, ignored those events, even though they duplicated most of the Review's other information; and the only similar incident they carried was one in which "five refugees were killed, several wounded when grenades launched from the Kampuchean side burst among them after they reached Thailand," without any speculation about the source of the fire.115

These episodes, the only ones reported at the time about which Heder was writing, hardly justify his lurid language, nor even the more moderate tone of the Review's conclusion that Vietnamese troops "have now taken to opening fire on refugees moving through what are effectively non-operational areas."116

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Heder's picture of PRK/Vietnamese oppression as outlined above is the STV of the refugees, and especially as presented by the Khmer Serei officials at Nong Samet or Nong Chan; and like much of the STV of the DK period, it does not find support when the refugee

reports are examined in detail. It is even less accurate than the STV for the 1975-79 period, since at that time there were many real atrocities which gave support to parts of the STV.

In fact, the STV for 1979-80 is so at variance with the truth that it must be based in part on deliberate lies; and this partly subverts the credibility of the same informants when they speak of 1975-79.

Having disposed of a few of the more serious accusations against the PRK regime and seen with what care the reports for 1979-80 must be treated, let us continue with examination of village and agricultural reorganization, since it is there that the success or failure of any Cambodian regime will ultimately be determined.

The three studies by Heder cited above contain the most detailed analysis of these questions yet available, and are based on more voluminous research (hundreds of interviews with peasants) than anyone else is likely to undertake; and taken together they show an interesting evolution of conditions in Cambodia and in the thought of an unsympathetic observer.

In my own much more limited contact with peasants out of Cambodia, I had by September 1980 acquired certain general impressions about life outside the towns. First the food situation was improving. After a serious shortage of rice in the second half of 1979 and a poor crop due to drought, prospects for the 1980-81 crop looked rather good. Even in 1979 it was uncertain that the rice shortage had seriously affected nutrition, which depends on many

other things as well, since very few of either the bourgeois refugees or the peasants coming to the border showed signs of serious hunger problems.

Second, villages had been reorganized in a relatively normal manner with little direct intervention by Vietnamese. The new village officials came from a variety of backgrounds - ex-Sihanouk and Lon Nol officials, peasants who had not been tainted by too close association with the DK regime, and even a few, but very few, reeducated DK cadres. As for land and the reorganization of agriculture, some said there was empty land free for the taking, presumably by those with the means to work it; one group said there was voluntary cooperative use of animals and tools because of shortages; still others complained that cooperative organization was being enforced by the authorities, and when asked about the lack of tools that might make it necessary, they asserted that if the peasants were given freedom to do as they wished, they would somehow find the tools. Finally, schools and temples were being reopened even at village level, with personnel in the former mostly survivors from before 1975.

Taken as a whole, Heder's much more detailed source material and analyses seem, in the end, and in spite of his emphasis on all possible derogatory aspects, to substantiate my impressions and to show definite improvement in living conditions throughout 1979 and 1980.

A first, controversial, matter is the fate of the 1978-79 rice crop which was being harvested, or about to be harvested, when the Vietnamese

invasion began. Some part of it was gathered up by the retreating DK forces, and some was destroyed by them to prevent it falling into the hands of the enemy.

Nevertheless, nearly all the refugees, when asked, related that in general large amounts of rice were left on the ground and in warehouses, and that because of this people could eat well in most places for several months. Nearly all refugees also assert that large amounts of the rice were taken away by the Vietnamese to Vietnam or to feed their troops in Cambodia. Heder accepts such assertions, and speaks of columns of trucks loading up rice to feed Vietnamese troops and administrators, and hundreds of trucks taking rice back to Vietnam, all supposedly on the basis of eyewitness reports.117 Now the Vietnamese-PRK forces did gather up and transport a good deal of rice, and a very good reason is seen in Heder's own account. He claims that half the villages of the country were deserted and their rice crops left to rot or be eaten by pests, resulting in loss of one-third of the country's total crop.118

The statistics are unverifiable, and show all the characteristics of having been pulled out of thin air; but there were deserted villages and if the Vietnamese harvested their rice they would have been doing everyone a favor. In Heder's account, however, the Vietnamese perversely left those villages alone, and only took rice where they would be in direct competition with the local population.

The rice collected by the Vietnamese, but not shipped to Vietnam, was distributed, according to Heder, in a descending order of

priorities to Vietnamese troops, PRK troops, and PRK provincial and district administrators.

No rice was distributed to the village peasants and the people who had fled to the towns; but since “Vietnamese officers and men would trade their excess rice … for meat, eggs, vegetables, and fruits,” which must have been supplied by peasants, the latter could not have been in too bad a state.119 Although Heder talked to many more people, I must nevertheless insist that my informants did not confirm his picture. They all spoke of the large amounts of rice left in the fields and warehouses after the DK retreat, said people were in general free to take what they wanted, and that for from three to six months, depending on the area, there was enough to eat.

In some places, for example the town of Kompong Cham, the Vietnamese sealed the warehouses, but left the rice in the fields for the populace.120 As for the destination of the rice they took, it is very difficult to find a reliable report of rice crossing the border to Vietnam. This is what most of the refugees wished to believe, and whenever they saw trucks on the move they assumed the purpose was to carry away loot.

But some of them were prepared to be more objective. H.N., whom I have cited more than once above, said he never saw Vietnamese soldiers taking rice, and observed that they ate wheat flour, which they would either have brought with them or obtained from Soviet aid. He also knew that they took large amounts of rice to Phnom Penh from the countryside and then redistributed it. Typically,

although he saw no evidence of misconduct, he wished to believe that the Vietnamese must have been looting rice secretly.

Some of the places where the Vietnamese would have wished to redistribute rice were in the Southwest and East Zones, where the food situation was worse than in the rest of the country,121 and the second of which they tended to favor because of its political background.122

Since those zones border Vietnam, anything being sent to them was heading toward Vietnam and could excite the suspicions of people who wished to believe ill of the Vietnamese.

Part of the Vietnamese efforts were in order to ration supplies and obtain seed for the next crop, efforts in which they got little cooperation from the Cambodian public,123 and when later in the year they tried to prevent harvesting in order to save rice for seed, it was interpreted as a deliberate attempt to starve people.124

In short, although we certainly cannot say that no Vietnamese ever stole rice, that none was taken to Vietnam or illicitly traded on the black market, their positive efforts at rationalizing a very bad situation were never appreciated by the population, and all their policies have been interpreted in the worst light.

Heder, on this matter, has generally followed the extreme propaganda version of Vietnamese misdeeds, and in my opinion misrepresents the situation. The former urbanites, when the DK

regime ended, wanted freedom of movement and return to cities. They got both, but refused to consider where the food would come from for cities and people on the move. They themselves would not cooperate in rationing the available supply, yet blamed the Vietnamese both for their efforts to ration and redistribute, and for not being able to supply the new non-peasants with everything they desired.

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In this connection one more matter requires comment. Heder noted, with apparent disapproval, the Vietnamese-PRK priorities for food distribution; and throughout 1979-80 hardly any journalistic treatment of Cambodia failed to criticize the PRK regime for first feeding its officials and employees while leaving the villagers for last. This is dishonest criticism.

Throughout the world the DK regime was blamed for unnecessarily destroying the towns. The PRK righted that wrong. Phnom Penh and other towns were reopened, a normal administration was set up, schools were reestablished. How were all the people involved in those activities expected to feed themselves? With short supplies and at first no money, food had to be given them by the state, and it was quite reasonable that such employees be first on the official distribution lists. A cabinet minister, a hydraulics engineer, a doctor, a

schoolteacher, or a factory worker could not be expected to grow his own rice, catch his own fish, and still perform his daily tasks. As for the peasants, even if 1979-80 were bad years for rice, they were out where all food was produced. They had first crack at whatever rice was produced, they could forage for other foods, they could fish and hunt; and as Heder has noted in two different contexts, they had fish, meat, fruit, and vegetables to trade. The same situation was emphasized by perceptive journalists in early 1979, who wrote that in the countryside they could at least plant some vegetables and tapioca, and “fish can be caught from ponds, fruit picked from trees.” In late 1980 as well, William Shawcross discovered that all sorts of fruit, "frogs with legs the size of chickens’ drumsticks, and … a plethora of fish, shrimp, crab, and lobster have always been available."125 It is nothing but perverse to insist that city life must be reestablished, but that food distribution should go first to food producers.

The real problem with the food producers was not immediate food aid but reorganization to enable them to produce enough for the entire country and eliminate the dependence on charity or loans from abroad.

In Heder’s first study he described how the new provincial and district administration set up by the Vietnamese favored educated people of almost any background except DK cadres, with, at those levels, large numbers of Vietnamese troops and experts in supervisory positions. Below the district, that is in real peasant territory, “the Vietnamese were much less overwhelming,” and

“leadership was selected by various means,” sometimes appointment from above, sometimes election or informal consultation. Here also the Vietnamese favored both literate people and those who had suffered under the DK regime, which often meant a resurgence of people prominent in Sihanouk and Lon Nol times, even though it was not desired that they dominate the local administration.126

Although the extreme collectivization of the DK period was abolished, a return to full private farming was not envisaged. Land was to be state property, and animals, carts, and other agricultural means of production, Heder says, were not to be returned to the pre-1975 owners, but given “to those who had taken care of these things during the Democratic Kampuchea period,” which it seems to me could only mean DK cadres, who were specifically excluded from any kind of privilege. The picture presented is thus unclear, but in any case policy is said to have changed after two or three months with the formation of 10-to-30-family mutual aid teams and the collectivization of all major means of production and their distribution among the team.127 At the time he wrote, Heder considered that peasants were unhappy with the new organizational forms, other people alienated, and that, “governed by an unpopular foreign military occupation force,” the "Kampuchean economy, in particular the crucial agricultural sector, was in a disastrous shambles with no visible chance of recovery."128

Between November 1979 and April 1980 a good deal of change is reflected in Heder’s second study. The Vietnamese presence in the

villages was even less than before, with troops stationed in no more than 10-20% of villages; and even there they had no responsibility for administration and were under instructions to interfere as little as possible.129

The great variety in selection and personnel of village leadership committees is again emphasized along with the circumstance that former Sihanouk and Lon Nol people tended to become more important than the government would have desired.

This inevitably had an effect on agricultural policy, which had apparently been changed again, although Heder does not call attention to that fact. The new policy was “solidarity teams … in which land, but not the means of agricultural production, should be collectivized,” with the latter again becoming private property. However, as instructions about the policy descended through the administration they were "less and less strictly and competently followed,” meaning obviously that their socialist content was increasingly ignored, and in the inevitable difficulties in deciding who should be the owners of private property, the tendencies of the village committees were very important, which must have meant that pre-1975 owners were favored and the maximum amount of equipment distributed as private property. As a result "many peasants were not sure what kind of ‘teams’ they were organized in and what the exact nature of property relations and regulations in the village was."130

Another important result was that “virtually all of Kampuchea’s agricultural production from that [1979-80] crop cycle was in private hands … in the hands of its producers.” “If the crops had been ‘normal’ ones, there probably would have been a sufficient supply of food and seeds … there should have been generally enough to go around.” But, “as is well known … the 1979 rainy season was greatly below ‘normal’ and the 1979-1980 dry season crop virtually non-existent.”

Besides drought, Heder lists several other reasons: war, looting after the war, insecurity, instability of the population, disorganization, but not, apparently, perniciousness or incompetence of the regime per se.131 There is an interesting observation to be made here.

The state in 1980 did not attempt to forcibly appropriate any of the crop for its own use, but relied on foreign aid, leaving the crop to the producers, who were not in general recipients of aid. This clearly argues against the thesis that the regime was selfishly neglecting its peasants, and since the latter generally blame drought for the crop failure, there must have been some reasonable expectation that the countryside, at least, might reach self-sufficiency in 1980.

Heder instead wished to emphasize that the crop failure was so serious that half to three-quarters of the teams failed to produce enough rice for the consumption needs of their households during the coming year, and an even larger number failed to produce enough for both consumption and seed. He predicted, therefore, that "1980 was going to be a year of shortages and that in many areas the

shortages would be more severe than … in 1979 … not only more severe shortages of food, [but] … also more severe shortages of means with which to produce food during the 1980 rainy season."132

The evolution in the Cambodian countryside reflected in Heder's first two studies is even more emphatically shown in his third, written toward the end of 1980.

First the villages had generally become stabilized, and stabilized as peasant entities with nearly all of the former urbanites gone. The new stable population, because of the vicissitudes of 1975-80, was more mixed than before; and the villages "represented the peasantry as a nationwide socioeconomic category … no longer relatively encapsulated closed entities containing peasants mostly related to each other."133

The Vietnamese presence and influence continued to diminish and the reversion to non-socialist forms of organization was more pronounced.

The same village committees generally remained in place, and when new members had to be chosen the same standards prevailed with the "selection … tending to revert to traditional patterns." The "ideal typical specimen [of a village committeeman] might be defined as a nice, clever, former middle peasant leader." Even the communist party was absent; "an overwhelming majority of the villages contained no Party member at all," and there was "only a minimal Party presence in the subdistricts [khum]."134

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The organization of agricultural production was still not very strict, with, as in 1979, “much confusion among villagers about exactly what kind of ‘team’ existed in their villages.” Moreover, there was a retreat from collectivization of land, with paddy land parcelled out to individual households, a development generally welcomed by the peasants.135

There was also a change in predictions about the coming rice crop.

First, the internal aid distribution network had improved, with, in particular, an all-out effort to distribute rice seed, which resulted in an apparently adequate supply of seed reaching about four-fifths of the villages.136

Interestingly, Heder estimated that only about one-fourth of this seed came from the state, and the rest from “household stocks from the harvest, from private trade among villagers” or in markets, and from Thai border distribution;137 and the apparent importance of ‘household stocks’ and village trade would seem to belie his earlier estimates of the failure of the 1979-80 crop.

Either that crop was much better than he thought, or the state distribution more successful than he wished to believe.

Whatever the source of the seed supply, it was sufficient for the peasants to predict in August 1980 that the crop would be more than twice that of 1979 and more than half an average prewar crop; and in some parts of Battambang some were even predicting a normal crop, all of course depending on the weather.138 Moreover, Heder noticed that the peasants gradually raised their expectations as the season progressed, an encouraging sign from all points of view. Such were also the comments I heard from my more limited contacts with peasants in August and September, and, with respect to the quality of some of the anti-Vietnamese/PRK information found in Heder and elsewhere, it is worth noting the remark of one of Nong Samet's administrators when confronted with the positive estimates: "yes, a lot of rice has been planted, but of course the Vietnamese will take it all as they did before."139 Of course, we know they did not take the previous year's rice crop, and reports since the 1981 harvest indicate that they did not take it nor the one in 1982 either.140 At Nong Chan, the land bridge, the administrators also liked to say that many peasants were robbed of their rice by the Vietnamese, while only one hundred yards away the peasants themselves denied it.

The total effect, according to Heder, of the various changes in rural life throughout 1980 was "to encourage the emergence of an economically privileged and powerful upper stratum of the peasantry … [in] village[s] where half or more of the paddy land was allotted to households … which had a flourishing private plot … raising lots of

poultry and maybe even pigs and catching lots of fish … flush with seed rice … owned draft animals and an oxcart." "Such upper strata peasants existed all over the country," although most were in the Northwest and the smallest proportion in the East, Southwest, and West, a situation duplicating prewar conditions.14

This means that, with due respect to Heder (Occupation), within less than two years after the change of regime, a counter-revolution had occurred in the countryside.

Along with this counter-revolution in favor of the more prosperous peasants- and minus the old merchant-usurer-official network - there was an encouraging increase in food production and minimum interference by the Vietnamese. The latter, contrary to predictions, had not only refrained from exploiting the Cambodian peasantry, but had even ignored their own ideological preferences in an apparently pragmatic realization that the best way to effect the stabilization of the countryside and increase food production was to leave the peasants as much as possible to themselves, even if this meant the reemergence of strata they would have preferred not to favor.

The physical presence of the Vietnamese was also diminishing. Everywhere but the Northwest troop reductions were noticeable, and even there no increase had been observed and their troops "seemed to be overwhelmingly engaged in garrison duty," something worth noting by those who fear they are about to invade Thailand. Moreover, the Vietnamese civilian experts as well seemed to be

gradually going home. This was particularly true of the lower levels of administration, but to some extent at the higher levels too.

Administrative affairs were increasingly in the hands of Cambodians, who were given more freedom for independent action, and it was no longer considered "necessary to have Vietnamese working in the same offices."142

In fact, "the regime and the Vietnamese had turned out to be not nearly as bad in many ways as most people had expected,"143 although Heder still preferred to emphasize a number of contradictions which he feels contribute to "widespread peasant dissatisfaction with the regime and its Vietnamese backers."144 On this he may be correct and his arguments, which are not those generally made by western critics of the Vietnamese and the PRK regime, merit discussion and will be taken up later.145

For the present my purpose is to emphasize that Heder's research, in the last analysis, concurs with my own impressions, and with the reports of most journalists and aid personnel within the country

but in contrast to the propaganda churned out by DK, the Khmer Serei, and Son Sann's KPNLF and retailed via a number of Bangkok-based journalists - that the policies of the PRK regime and its Vietnamese backers have been humane, pragmatic, and unoppressive, with the Vietnamese gradually withdrawing and leaving administration in the hands of the Cambodians themselves.

The above discussion has centered on the rehabilitation of rural life; but most of the informants who told me about conditions during 1979-80 were bourgeois refugees in KID who, following the destruction of the DK apparatus, returned to the towns and either accepted for a time, or were offered and refused, positions with the new regime before deciding to become refugees. They are thus an anti-PRK group, and therefore whenever their information reveals positive aspects of the regime it is particularly valuable.

The nearly unanimous evidence of these people is that they were offered opportunities to return to work related to their education and former status, for the SF immediately began to fulfill its promises to reestablish a normal administration, schools, and the basic features of urban life.

The information which Heder recorded concerning their disillusionment on returning to the towns in early 1979, to the effect that they could not “return to their original homes or original endeavors” because the Vietnamese were occupying “all the schools, pagodas, public buildings and factories,” is at least misleading, since many people did return to their original homes, and is dishonest in asking, "how could one return to teaching if one’s school was a [Vietnamese] barracks?"146 Schools were one of the aspects of pre-DK life where an immediate effort at rehabilitation was undertaken, and all the 500-odd former teachers in KID in 1980 could have had employment in the reviving school system in Cambodia. Temples were also soon reopened and monks reordained, factories,

depending on their purpose and the availability of materials, set in motion, and public buildings used again for public purposes.147

Whenever the Vietnamese/SF forces took over a community, they announced locally, and after taking Phnom Penh they broadcast over national radio, an outline of their program together with a request for former members of the administrative, educational, and technical services to come forward and participate in the reconstruction of a new administration. One exceptional report, illustrating the general sincerity of the call, came from a man then in Oudar Meanchey in the far north, where the new SF authorities refused to let former urbanites leave until a new rice crop had been planted.

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Eventually people began to run away in spite of the prohibition when they realized that force would not be used to hold them back.148

Although some of the people concerned may have been quite understandably apprehensive about responding, since a similar call for cooperation in April 1975 had been followed by repression or execution, it was soon clear from the full freedom of movement allowed that the new regime was qualitatively different from the old. Not only could people reveal their true identities without being

arrested, but they could refuse to work and set off across country to Phnom Penh, Battambang, or the Thai border.

H.N., cited above, was still in Kratie, Damban 505, when the SF nucleus was formed there at the end of 1978. He worked for them as a group leader (protean krom) for two months and then took leave to look for his family, whom he believed to be in Prey Veng. Finding that his family had been killed in the 1978 massacres, he went on to Phnom Penh, arriving there in February 1979, and was given work as a subdistrict (khum) secretary in the Phnom Penh area. His own house was unoccupied, and his books were still there, but much of the furniture had been stolen, he believed, during the transition between regimes. After three months he was given a better job in the administration of the municipal radio service, and he held it until leaving for the border in November. Already in early 1979 many of the intellectuals who had returned to Phnom Penh were forming secret anti-Vietnamese organizations, and were trying to contact foreign agents on the Thai border to obtain aid. H.N., although obviously not because he was being personally abused, cooperated with them and through that activity eventually decided to leave.

Another former intellectual who began working for the Salvation Front practically as soon as they crossed the border from Vietnam was the law student from Kirivong, Damban 13.149 From January to November 1979 he served as chief of a group of several villages (sangkat) and then left simply because he did not want to work with Vietnamese.

A former official of SONEXIM, the prewar state foreign trade organization, P.P., also reached Phnom Penh very early in 1979, and he also stated that former officers and intellectuals were plotting against the new regime as early as January or February. He himself refused to work for the new government because he considered the rations they provided in lieu of salary to be insufficient, and he preferred to live in the Pochentong suburb engaging in petty trade (thus, with due respect to Heder, some of the urban squatters in 1979 did not feel that the condition of the favored government employees was superior to their own independent, if precarious, existence).150 He remained there for nearly a year, and left for the border in January 1980.

Another man who had been a law student and pre-1975 political activist, and who reached Phnom Penh in February 1979, found his own house locked up and secure as he had left it four years earlier; and he considered that to be the normal situation. He refused, however, to stay and work for the new regime, and soon headed for the border to join the Khmer Serei.151 South of Phnom Penh he observed large amounts of rice both in the fields and in storage after January 1979. He said the Vietnamese then removed some of it by boat, but there was still a good supply available when he left for Thailand in May 1979.

C.S., whose rather peculiar background has been noted above,132 came to the city somewhat later, in May, and claims that he was made chief of the government accounting office. In spite of that he complained that “the PAVN/Heng Samrin did not give him any peace

at all" and had him followed. If so, they had some reason, for he had repaid their confidence in him by leading one of the new secret organizations, the "Reachasiha" ("Royal Lion"). He also knew of other such organizations, named "Proleung Khmer" ("Khmer Soul"), "Kang Chak" ("Discus"), and "Neak Cheat Niyum" ("Nationalist").153 Even then the Cambodian Right apparently found it impossible to agree on an organization or program.

Another former intellectual who refused to cooperate was M.Y., who had spent the DK period in the Northwest and in April 1979 moved to the town of Battambang where he lived on Vietnamese handouts of rice and corn until he left for the border in November. As a former university technical instructor he could easily have found a suitable position, but he refused to work either in Battambang or in Phnom Penh in spite of a request made by the new government. Interestingly, at the time I met him, in September 1980, his relatives in Chhihe, Kompong Cham, East Zone, had just sent him a letter saying that life was tolerable again and they wanted him to come home; but he refused to consider cooperation with the Vietnamese.154 .

Van, the articulate informant from Kampot, found petty trading in Phnom Penh more interesting than working for the government, where he probably would have been more than welcome for his relatively high level of education. Instead, from July to November 1979 he lived with his brother, a tire factory employee, and travelled around the city by bicycle trading in various odd things, such as tire valves, medicine, and books from the old French Cultural Center.

Two more former urbanites, schoolteachers, who refused to join the new system were Ngo and S.I .; 155 but their choice, in contrast to the conventional wisdom about the relative desirability of different situations in 1979, was to remain peasants, alleging that they could feed themselves and their families better than working in Phnom Penh as government employees.

Ngo remained in Koh Sautin, Kompong Cham, a good area even in DK times, until May 1979; while S.I. kept farming in Chikreng, Siemreap, until August 1980 in spite of repeated requests from Phnom Penh to join the new Ministry of Education.

Ngo said that in his area the Vietnamese did not remove rice either from fields or from granaries; but in Kompong Cham city all warehouses were empty when people were allowed into town. Among the more interesting refugees who had worked for the new government was C.C., a hydraulics engineer who reached Phnom Penh in April 1979 and was promptly given a position in the Ministry of Agriculture.

The top ranks of the ministry's organization were the minister, Men Chhon, a former East Zone DK officer with no professional qualifications; three Khmer deputy ministers, two of whom were Party men and the third an agricultural engineer, and one Vietnamese deputy minister. Below them were ten directorates, of which C.C. became the chief of the one concerned with irrigation and hydraulic engineering. In each directorate there was a Khmer chief who was

professionally qualified with an assistant who was a political appointee and a Vietnamese adviser, some of whom were real experts and some not.

C.C.'s main task during the period he worked for the ministry was to travel all over the country inspecting the irrigation works and draw up plans for their repair. In his opinion about 80% of the new irrigation projects of DK had been poorly constructed, with the best being on the Chinit river in Kompong Thom, the Pursat river in Pursat, and the Slako river in Takeo. A large project at Banan, Damban 3, mentioned by many refugees, had completely broken down. By June 1980 about 50% of the needed repairs had been effected. In his plans for the reconstruction of irrigation works, he came into conflict with the Vietnamese, who had sent about 300 hydraulics experts to help in the work, because they wanted to focus on large projects while he preferred smaller-scale repairs; and as a result there were two different plans, his own and the Vietnamese', each concentrating on different projects. In his opinion the Vietnamese wanted large projects strictly for show, in order to demonstrate their contribution to Cambodia.

In his observations on agriculture and food conditions in general, he said that in 1979 everyone could eat well from the rice stocked in warehouses and still in the fields, and starvation only occurred among those people who moved about the country; but in 1980 the food situation was worse because of the failure of the 1979-80 crop. The 1980 plan had called for planting 1,500,000 hectares (compared with 2 million before the war), but by June only about 30% had been

done, because of lack of equipment. There was enough seed available in Phnom Penh from international aid, but too few trucks to transport it (thus he did not blame Vietnamese perfidy).156

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As for the living conditions of Phnom Penh officials, before money salaries were introduced in April 1980 they were paid with a basic ration of rice. The Minister received 700 grams per day, officials of C.C.'s level 400, with a 200-gram supplement for other family members and occasional distributions of fish, vegetables, and other foods. When money salaries calculated in the new Cambodian riel were implemented, the food distribution ended and all employees were entitled to purchase specified quantities of subsidized commodities from the State Market (phsar rod) located in the former 'New Market' in the center of town. C.C., whose monthly salary was 170 riels, was allowed a monthly ration of 18 kg. of rice for himself at 1 riel per kg., 9 kg. each for other family members, 3 kg. of meat, plus two shirts and two pairs of trousers per year. Housing was provided free. Ministers and soldiers were allowed 21 kg. of rice per month, and ordinary office workers 15.

The salary, in C.C.'s opinion, was not enough to live on, since many other items had to be purchased on the free market, and this was one of the reasons for his decision to flee. Another reason was that

he had been proposed for a six-month study tour in Vietnam. It was not, he emphasized, that he suspected foul play. Those sent to Vietnam were the ones most trusted by the regime (thus the conflict over irrigation policy had not been held against him), and he had acquaintances who had gone, returned, and reported that they were well treated and life was not difficult. The subjects of study were mainly political: communist theory and practice, and Vietnamese-Cambodian solidarity. It was simply that he did not want to go to Vietnam at all or take part in a course of political education, so in July 1980 he left for the Thai border.

Interestingly, his intention on leaving Phnom Penh had not been to go abroad as a refugee, but to join the Khmer Serei and work, he believed, for Cambodian independence; but disillusioned with the corruption and incompetence of the Khmer Serei, he was forced to go on to Khao I Dang.157

Another engineer who had worked under C.C. in the same section of the ministry came out at about the same time. He had nothing more to add about the operations of the ministry, except that his own salary was 140 riels; but he stated that after the Vietnamese took Kampot, where he had spent the DK years, they did not carry away any rice, and there was enough for people to eat for at least six months. He did not come to Phnom Penh until September 1979, and had always planned to flee as soon as there was a favorable opportunity.

One more person who had held an interesting position was M.H. After the DK administration in Damban 5 was destroyed, he wandered from there through Siemreap to his home in Kompong Cham province, where he remained for three months before going to Phnom Penh in June 1979. As a former engineering student it was easy to obtain state employment, and he was first sent to a political education course from July to November. Life during the course was rather hard with collective meals and strict discipline. The subjects studied were Cambodian history, Vietnamese-Cambodian solidarity, and communist theory, and the teachers included some Vietnamese, and also Hun Sen, the Foreign Minister. Following the course he was assigned to the salary and employment section of the Finance Ministry, where there were 18 Khmer officials, 11 with professional qualifications, and two Vietnamese experts.

According to him, the population of Phnom Penh in August 1980, when he left, was about 200,000 with 50,000 salaried state employees. He did not know the number of state workers for the whole country since those in the provinces had not yet been centralized under the ministry. The highest salary was 260 riels per month, and was given to three people, Heng Samrin, Pen Sovan, and Sae Pouthang, the Director General of Cadres. The lowest salary, that of an ordinary worker, was 65 riels, with the average around 90.

His own salary was 105. Other interesting salary statistics were: Minister 230, schoolteachers from 90 to 120 with pre-revolutionary seniority credited, and university instructors with doctorates, pharmacists, and doctors starting at 135. M.H. considered that none

of the salaries were adequate, and that an adult living only on salary needed 20 riels per day.

The introduction of the new riel had been rather successful, at least in the larger towns, and in particular had displaced the Vietnamese dong which had earlier been widely used around Phnom Penh. However, no national budget had yet been drawn up, there were no plans for taxes or forced deliveries of food, and it was expected that after the 1980-81 harvest, surplus rice, if any, would be obtained through voluntary sales by peasants, something which in fact occurred.158

However low the standard of living of Cambodian officials, M.H. was able to observe that the Vietnamese experts in Phnom Penh were even less favored. They received their salaries in dong which they had to convert at the rate of 3 dong for 1 riel, leaving them with less cash than their Khmer counterparts.

Most of them, about 40 in number, lived together in a place which M.H. had visited, and all ranks shared the same food and accommodation.

This information, together with the rest of M.H.'s report and that of Mrs. K.D. below, definitely gives the lie to propaganda of the KPNLF organization about exploitation by Vietnamese advisers.159 Like the other professionals from among the former urban population, M.H. said he left because he did not like socialism, the Vietnamese, and the low living standard, not because of any personal difficulties or

specific harassment. Moreover, he had been in a position to observe that the Vietnamese working in Cambodia had not come in order to live well. On his way to the border he rode on a convoy of trucks taking rice to Battambang, for which he paid 70 riels per person, and from there to the border was able to get past the patrols for only 10 baht (U.S. 50 cents). Mention was made above of the 'State Market' where government employees could buy subsidized food; and among the KID refugees was a woman who had held an important post there between May 1979 and May 1980.

Mrs. K.D., whose experiences in Kampot in 1975-79 were noted above,160 related that in early 1979 an office for 'Municipal Economy' (sethakec krong) with about 20 employees was set up to handle the distribution of food and other essential commodities to the people arriving in the newly reopened city. The most important items for distribution in the beginning were rice and children's clothes; and the rice, which was channeled down from the Ministry of Economy, was all foreign aid rice, in the beginning mostly from Vietnam. Besides the central municipal area, they effected distributions in the 11 sangkats (a supravillage administrative area) around the city, and considerable aid also got farther out on the roads toward Battambang, Kompong Speu, Kien Svay, and Koh Thom.161

In January 1980 the organization was enlarged and the name changed to 'Office of Municipal Commerce.' It then consisted of four branches for (1) rice and corn, (2) other foods such as vegetables, salt, and meat, (3) housing, and (4) other consumer goods, the one in

which Mrs. D.K. worked with a salary of 110 riels. In the entire organization there were about 1,000 employees, and in her own office 14, with one Vietnamese expert as adviser.

Mrs. D.K. emphasized that all the rice and consumer goods were from foreign aid, mainly from the socialist countries, with many things from Vietnam. As examples of goods sold, she mentioned woven mats (from Vietnam) for 4-7 riels, Vietnamese bicycles 60 riels, Russian radios 420, Russian bicycles 900; and some of the food prices she recalled were beef 12 riels per kg., pork 15, eggs 5 for 1 riel, and beans 3/10 riel per kg. The market was always well supplied, and there were always sufficient goods to meet demand. Obviously some of them were priced far beyond the reach of people living entirely on salaries, and their purpose must have been to soak up some of the hoarded wealth which suddenly appeared in 1979; but the food prices seem appropriate for the salary level of the state employees.

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In addition to the subsidized store, the state also operated ‘free’ food markets where anyone, employees or others, could purchase unrationed quantities, and where rice, for example, cost 212-3 riels per kilo.

This ‘official free price’ seems to have determined, or perhaps was determined by, the non-government free market price, since 3 riels per kg. was the price quoted by refugees from the northwestern towns as well.

In general Mrs. K.D. was impressed by the amount of aid that had come from the USSR, Vietnam, and other socialist countries in addition to western aid, and as far as she had been able to observe it was distributed honestly; but she nevertheless wished to believe that the Vietnamese must have been doing something underhanded.

She had no complaint about her treatment under the PRK, and she felt that life for state employees was tolerable. Not having her own house in Phnom Penh to return to, she was given quarters on Kampuchea Krom street, a former good middle-class area in the center of town, and found them normally adequate except for the low water pressure, which was insufficient to pump water above the second floor. Her motive for leaving Cambodia was to rejoin her husband, who had been sent to France just before the end of the war in 1975.

One story of a quite different type of experience from any of the above was that of a small businessman in Sisophon, about 45 km from the Thai border and one-third of the way to Battambang.

His experiences during the DK years have been treated above,162 and when I met him in June 1980 he had just come to KID in order to bring his 3-4-year-old son to the hospital for medical treatment

unavailable at home. He had not come in order to remain as a refugee, and intended to return home, where he had left his wife and other family members, as soon as his son was well.

In Sisophon he earned his living as a radio repair man working independently, and he had started up his prewar trade again in January 1979 as soon as people had raided the warehouse to recover the radios confiscated and stocked in April 1975. He was generally paid for his work in rice, and said the new riel currency had not yet come into full acceptance in the Northwest. When I asked him about the stories of Vietnamese/PRK oppression I had heard, he insisted that he and other artisans had complete freedom to work privately or join a state organization, and that no one in the Northwest had been forced to do anything, least of all evacuated from the towns to work permanently in the fields.

With respect to general living conditions he considered that the towns had adequate food, but that there was a lack of rice in the villages. Even there, though, corn was plentiful (if so, it would have been from state aid distribution, it is nourishing even if disliked, and it could have accounted for the general well-fed appearance of peasants who complained of insufficient rice). In spite of the generally improving conditions, he felt people were worried about the future. They were afraid of communism, even though the new regime seemed benign, and were worried about possible food shortages.

He predicted that the rice crop at the end of 1980 would be bad, a prediction now proven inaccurate. Apparently Voice of America

broadcasts were also contributing to the general malaise, and undermining confidence in the government, by continually talking of large amounts of foreign aid delivered to Cambodia, but not getting out to distant towns and villages.

Remarks by many different refugees showed that the normal features of modern cultural life were being reestablished. The peasants at Nong Chan, the former DK soldier Tep, as well as people from Phnom Penh, all said that schools, even in villages, were being reestablished to the extent that teachers were available; and primary-level textbooks for reading and arithmetic which were brought out of Cambodia showed that subject matter and methods of instruction at that level were similar both to the prewar norm and to work being done at KID. The only thing the KID teachers found objectionable in the Phnom Penh books were the lessons about Viet-Lao-Khmer friendship and cooperation, which represented 'politics,' in contrast to the presumably non-political traditional hostility toward the neighboring countries fostered by prewar governments.

The early reports about Vietnamization of the syllabus and the forced instruction of Vietnamese language in schools proved to be untrue.

Not only the Nong Chan peasants denied that it was so in village schools, but a relatively important Education Ministry employee who defected in June 1980, and whose views on the PRK were very negative, said that Vietnamese language instruction had been

proposed, but rejected by the Khmer education committees (in spite of the alleged Vietnamese oppression) and the idea indefinitely shelved. The same man, however, claimed that the educational system was being distorted by the linking of Cambodian and Vietnamese provinces, that this put control of day-to-day operation of schools under a Vietnamese province instead of the ministry in Phnom Penh, and that teachers could not even be engaged without reference to the appropriate Vietnamese province.

This allegation was not supported by any other informant, all of whom said teachers were chosen locally from among qualified survivors, and it must be dismissed as a propaganda invention to justify his own refusal to serve even a benign regime. His general social attitude was emphasized by another criticism of the authorities - that they tried to discourage conspicuous consumption (such as too lavish weddings) by those who had recovered hidden wealth, something one would think reasonable in the situation of 1979-80, and that they required government office employees to dress in conservative shirts and trousers and keep their hair trimmed neatly, regulations which, as I reminded him, also prevailed in the prewar administration which we both knew.

A positive assessment of the higher levels of the new school system was offered by a 22-year-old man who had been in his final year of high school in 1975 and who in 1979 returned to Lycee Sisowath in Phnom Penh. He said that high schools and university departments were being reestablished as teachers became available, and that students were given special treatment including quite adequate food

rations. His own experience seemed unfortunate in that he had been happy in Phnom Penh, was doing well in school and was possibly in line for a state scholarship to go abroad for advanced training, but instead came out to the Khmer Serei border camps at the insistence of older family members who disapproved of cooperation with the Salvation Front.163

If religion does not have the same priorities for the new government as education, traditional Buddhism is at least tolerated and temples are again functioning with former monks reordained. In the small town of Nimit near the Thai border, for example, a peasant who had come to Nong Chan reported in September 1980 that there were 16 monks, a fairly large complement for a community that size.

Christians, however, were still having some trouble. One of the evangelical pastors said that after returning to Phnom Penh in May 1979 he twice tried to start his church meetings, but in January 1980 and again in May was warned to stop, because the only permitted religion was Buddhism. In order to obtain permission, he several times met Ros Samay, then Minister for Special Affairs. The latter, he said, dealt with him politely and told him to wait, that eventually permission would be given; but since his faith demanded that he preach and make converts he could not be patient, so he left the country. Both he and another pastor had also heard that the Vietnamese considered Christianity to be too closely connected to the United States, and thus they disapproved of it.164

One prewar university student and schoolteacher told of having been employed in the National Library and of the efforts being made to reassemble collections which had been dispersed; and because of allegations made since 1975 against the DK authorities in this connection, it is important to emphasize the testimony of the first well-educated returnees to Phnom Penh in 1979.

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In January 1979 a former law student found the libraries of the Law School, the Buddhist Institute, the Lanka and Ounalom temples intact, and discovered that personal possessions in houses had also been preserved; but by February other returnees found the Lanka and Ounalom temples and the main university library empty, and the Buddhist Institute partially looted.

The general consensus of the early returnees was that the DK authorities had just locked up all houses and public buildings they were not using and that looting had occurred in the transition of early 1979. One of them had observed that sidewalk vendors appeared to be using pages from recently stolen books as wrapping paper.165 The contents of the museum and the Silver Pagoda, contrary to early rumors, seem to have been preserved, and have now been visited by foreigners. In the case of the National Library, which received attention in the international press, my informants were less certain,

but knew that “many” books were still there.166 According to C.K., the man who worked there from July 1979 to February 1980, about 40% of the original book collections remained. He had been hired simply by offering himself for employment, and with two other former teachers and a Vietnamese adviser formed the administrative staff of the library. The library organization plan in 1979 was to centralize all surviving collections in the National Library premises, and the Buddhist Institute materials, as well as the remains of former private book stores, had already been moved.167

C.K. was very unfriendly to the PRK and as in other such cases his stories provided certain interesting revelations. For example, he complained that the Vietnamese library expert would only allow them to display magazines from the socialist countries, not from the ‘free world.’ When I asked what ‘free world’ magazines were available in 1979, he said they were part of the libraries’ old collections. “Hadn’t they all been destroyed by Pol Pot?” “No, only about 40%.”

He was also very critical of foreign aid distribution, but damaged his credibility by asserting that the ‘State Market,’ described above, was run entirely by Vietnamese staff. He also, strangely, complained that Cambodian fish were being distributed there, apparently feeling that the administration should be entirely supported by foreign aid, without using local produce at all - an extreme example of the tendency among some KID refugees to repeat, or invent, the strangest tales in order to discredit the regime and justify their own position.

One more aspect of the reports about life in PRK Phnom Penh which needs discussion is the assertion of many well-educated refugees that intellectuals and professionals are harassed, oppressed, or subject to arbitrary arrest, even murder.

When confronted with such statements, I asked for details - who, why, where. The former Education Ministry official, when pressed for specifics, said, “well, there’s the case of X.,” mentioning the name of a well-known prewar intellectual who joined the Salvation Front very early and received a prominent if probably innocuous post. “You mean he has been arrested?” I asked. “No, not yet, but he is certain to be if he doesn’t get away and go abroad.” And the reason, he said, was that X. had opposed some element of Vietnamese or PRK policy in an important meeting and was thus certain to suffer punishment. In fact, X. still (1983) holds his post in Phnom Penh, and the story about his action, if true, like the story of the educators who refused to have Vietnamese taught in the schools, is evidence of PRK tolerance of disagreement.

Several other people, when pressed for examples of government oppression, pointed to the case of D., a prominent professional who early in 1979 had been appointed chief of an essential service in his own field of competence. This man had in fact been arrested, tried, and imprisoned just a few months later, around July; and at the time I first heard the story his subsequent fate was unknown to my informants, who assumed the worst, and who claimed that his case was nothing more than blatant persecution.

As I interrogated more people, however, I learned that D. had first been charged with malversation, selling supplies in his charge on the black market, and then he was accused of supporting the Khmer Serei underground. By May 1980, however, he had been released and seen by old acquaintances in Phnom Penh, one of whom opined that there might very well have been some truth in the corruption charge.168

This was the only specific case to which most of the refugees could point. They also knew vaguely of unidentified people who had been arrested for supporting the Khmer Serei underground, and one man even knew a few names, not surprising given that several such organizations began operating as soon as the DK apparatus was destroyed and that they in fact represent efforts to overthrow the government by force. The cases are so few, though, that the government's policy seems to be tolerance, in the hope that as conditions within the country improve and the Khmer Serei on the Thai border show themselves ever more incompetent, their support will disappear.

Close study of the combined evidence on the PRK regime - from peasants who are still there, bourgeoisie who have left, and material published elsewhere - shows that the situation is in general optimistic and much of the derogatory information simply untrue. The desperate conditions which existed in some places in early 1979 were the results of the objective situation, not Vietnamese perfidy; and since then there has been steady economic progress.

Much of the difficulty in 1979 was in fact clearly because of the refusal of many non-peasants to cooperate in any long-term effort for the benefit of the whole community; and one could reasonably argue that the PRK-Vietnamese coalition was in the beginning too liberal for the country's own good.

Perhaps after the sudden release from oppression it was only to be expected that many Cambodians thought only of rest, returning to old habits, and eating without thought for the morrow; but blame for the results must fall on themselves, not on the Vietnamese or Salvation Front, particularly when we observe the same shortsighted greed and factiousness in their attempts to organize anti-communist movements within the country in 1979, in KID and in the Khmer Serei border camps where they are able to operate as they wish.169 Their refusal to cooperate for the general welfare, suggests that in 1975, without force, they would also have refused cooperation in the country's reconstruction and that some of their suffering may have been their own fault. At least, we are certain that in 1979-80, when the intellectual and professional bourgeoisie was again favored by the authorities, their complaints and stories of oppression were generally without foundation; and this gives additional legitimacy to the belief that their STV for 1975-79 may require modification, and to efforts to subject it to a very close reading.

The same sort of reflection from 1979 back onto material about the DK period may illuminate further the position of Francois Ponchaud.

As we have just seen, the stories he fobbed off on Shawcross were almost entirely inaccurate, particularly if taken as representing the general situation rather than the isolated incidents from which some of them arose. Moreover, Ponchaud must have realized that his sources were inherently unreliable, but that the half-warning he provided Shawcross would be lost on the public who, like Shawcross, would be dazzled by Ponchaud's presumed authority. His intention there was quite dishonest, whatever the accuracy of any individual report; and this strengthens my earlier contention that his purposes and the total picture presented in Cambodia Year Zero require careful examination, regardless of the objective truth of any event chronicled.

Contrary to the STV being spread by Ponchaud, the Khmer Serei groups, the rump DK, and the KID refugees, most of the individual stories of bourgeois refugees who worked for the PRK, as well as the peasants who still live in Cambodia, reveal many relatively positive aspects of life in present-day Cambodia which fit well with Heder's description of the evolution of the internal situation, in spite of his bias and emphasis on negative details. Moreover, the news out of Cambodia at the end of 1980 and the first half of 1981 indicated both that the evolutionary aspect of Heder's analysis was accurate and that the positive information of my sources was typical rather than aberrant.170 The crop harvested between November 1980 and January 1981 was good, starvation was no longer a danger, the population had settled down, the Vietnamese kept turning more responsibility over to Cambodians; and of course the inhumane social conditions of Democratic Kampuchea were reversed.

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## The Current Situation (1981-82)

The optimistic inferences which in 1980 could be drawn from interviews with both peasants and bourgeois refugees, and which found confirmation in careful reading of Heder's reports, were still valid in August-September 1981 when I visited Cambodia for three weeks.

The only change for the worse had been in acts of nature - flooding in the southeastern provinces and drought in the west and southwest. That was expected to affect the 1981-82 rice crop adversely, meaning that Cambodia would not be self-sufficient in rice in 1982, as some had expected, and would need more international aid.

Throughout the second and third quarters of 1981, the question of a rice shortage received rather much attention in the international media, often in a way that appeared to be orchestrated by the same western embassies, intelligence experts, and Bangkok-based journalists who had predicted a famine each year since 1979 only to see the country go on to increasing levels of material prosperity. Characteristically, those sources blamed socialism, Vietnam, and the UN, and their campaign coincided with more serious attempts to

cobble together an anti-Phnom Penh coalition on the Thai border and to criticize the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) for its refugee policies.171

It was not all propaganda, of course, since the floods and drought were real, and the PRK government was openly and officially recognizing the probability of a significant shortfall. FAO and UNICEF people in Phnom Penh, however, after visiting the northwest, those vast plains of Battambang and Siemreap provinces which had always been the country's grain surplus area and were further developed under DK, were impressed by the apparently successful crops they saw in the fields, and began to revise downward their estimates of Cambodia's requirements in food aid for 1982.172

However much the food supply may have shrunk in 1982, there was no sign of a coming crisis in August-September 1981. In Phnom Penh, where the population may approach the 600,000-plus level of the prewar city, the people appeared well-fed, active, and cheerful; and there was no sign of a food emergency, actual or potential, or indications that any Cambodians, with the exception of Ministry of Agriculture officials, might be concerned about it.

The following impressions of Phnom Penh which I wrote down at the time may be reproduced unchanged.173

Little coffee shops and restaurants, some surprisingly good, abound and provide a wide choice of Khmer, Vietnamese, Chinese, and western food, with which one can drink the seemingly unlimited

supply of bottled Vietnamese or tinned Heineken beer. Both in these establishments and in the innumerable small markets which have sprung up in every section of the city,the careless display and consumption of food shows no concern with the serious rice shortage which is projected for 1982.

Indeed, given such projections, reasonably based on drought in the west and floods in the east, one would expect some system of rationing; but there seems to be no place for such planning. Of course a shortage of rice alone would not necessarily be disastrous.

Such a shortage has occurred each year since 1979 and has been alleviated by foreign aid; but the other, even more essential foods - vitamin-rich vegetables and protein-filled meats, eggs, and fish - are local products. The country has thus really been feeding itself and its already overgrown capital, and has so far given the lie to the annual predictions of famine which are spread abroad by certain media.

Besides the food shops, the sidewalks are also lined with all sorts of petty tradesmen - bicycle, tire, and radio repairmen, photographers, barbers, tailors, and the ubiquitous old women selling petrol, obviously obtained illegally, in whiskey bottles. Since there is as yet no privileged class who would normally be the beneficiaries of service occupations, the population seems to be essentially trading with one another, “taking in one another’s laundry,” as one foreign aid official put it.

There is much movement, on foot, by bicycle and motorcycle, and in ‘cyclos,’ that old Indochinese institution made of a passenger seat attached either fore or aft of a bicycle or motorcycle frame. Just as before, the ‘cyclos’ are owned, not by their operators, but by fleet proprietors who rent them out at 20 riels per day, above which the driver hopes to make at least a 10-riel surplus for his livelihood. There are, however, few-automobiles; Phnom Penh may be nearly as bustling as before, but at a lower level of personal wealth.

In spite of the new government’s antecedents, facade, and proclaimed goals, nothing really ‘socialist’ has as yet been attempted. Markets seem to be totally free, with no restrictions except that they may not be located in the former central market places of the major towns, which are empty and have been set aside for future use by the state. These new markets are abundantly supplied with local foodstuffs and handicrafts plus all sorts of consumer goods smuggled in from both Thailand and Vietnam. The government has set up no serious obstacles to the smuggling trade, which has been financed first of all by the export of hoarded gold and other valuables, but now also involves such Kampuchean products as dried fish, a delicacy prized in Thailand.

In the very first months after the end of the Pol Pot regime, the free market may have been a way to rapidly supply basic goods which were in short supply, but since trade had to be financed by gold, little of which was in the hands of the peasants, 80% or more of the population, the market has come to be a channel of luxuries and

more or less useless, if not noxious (uncontrolled medicines from Thailand), items to the city population.

The first impression is thus of a newly burgeoning healthy urban life after its devastation in 1975-79.

It is soon clear, however, that very few of the present population are of the prewar 600,000. Most of those people either perished or have fled abroad since 1979, and Phnom Penh has been resettled by former villagers who have rushed into the city and squatted in the new freedom of the past 2 years.

They live in flats and shophouses with their chickens and pigs, cook in the streets, and try to make an urban life for themselves by petty trade.

Phnom Penh has thus already become the nonproductive, consumer city which it was before, although on a much less lavish scale, but with the same inherent dangers for national development, or more accurately at present, national recovery.

Water, light, and sewage services have not yet been restored to a capacity sufficient for the new population, and although in most parts of the city water cannot be pumped above the ground floor, the upper stories are inhabited by people as careless of rubbish and sewage disposal as they would have been in backcountry villages. There is a real danger that the inevitable wear and tear of such disordered urban village life may outstrip the capacities of the new

administration to repair the damage done before 1979 and restore the city to a semblance of its former self.

Some observers, seeing the lively Phnom Penh market through western optics, have found it a healthy development and talk of Cambodia recovering under capitalism, but this may be no more than ideological prejudice. Previous Cambodian experience shows that wealth thus accumulated will not be invested in productive activities, but will go for direct consumption and acquisition of luxuries, representing a steady drain of potential capital abroad and a glut of imported products which the country, at the present time, would be better off without.

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Although the new riel currency, established in April 1980, has been accepted by the population and is used in the markets, the riel salaries paid by the government are too low to permit much purchase on the market, and thus hoarded gold or silver are still the ultimate mediums of exchange.

In theory the market might be a way of attracting surplus food production, in exchange for consumer goods, from the peasants, obviating the need for the state to rely on foreign aid to feed its employees; but surpluses have so far been small, government

employees could not buy their requirements on the unsubsidized market without higher salaries, and the peasants, especially those of the northwest and southeast, might just as well trade directly across the borders as through the Phnom Penh market.

Surplus food does come into Phnom Penh, as the well-stocked numerous small restaurants testify; but the prices indicate that most of it is not being consumed by people on salary, but by those with an income from trade.

There is thus a danger of Phnom Penh regressing to the prewar situation in which an urban trading community accumulated the country's surplus agricultural wealth to sell abroad, importing luxuries which most people, especially government employees, could not honestly afford, and leading to a downward spiral of corruption.

At least one would expect the state to cream off some of the surplus through taxation, but aside from some small market stall fees there is no taxation at all, and the more profitable activities, such as gold trading and the sale of imported medicines, being illegal, cannot be taxed. When it is suggested that stricter licensing, heavier taxation, or the organization of the under-employed urban population into labor groups to perform needed infrastructural tasks, such as restoration of urban services or repair of roads, might be a practicable way of contributing to the state budget, officials throw up their hands in horror and evoke 'Pol Pot.' Allegedly because of the excesses of his regime, Cambodians can no longer accept any form of discipline. There is admittedly a problem there, but in the refusal

to deal with it in other than a laissez-faire manner, Cambodians show that they are still, even under “socialism,” a ‘soft country’ as described years ago by Gunnar Myrdal in his Asian Drama. 174

The same situation on a smaller scale prevails in Battambang, the country’s second largest city, and in Siemreap, both of which like Phnom Penh were generally spared from war damage. In fact, market activity in Battambang, and in Sisophon farther to the northwest, as conduits for the cross-border trade with Thailand, may be even more intense. Other provincial towns are apparently reviving in the same way, but with more attention necessarily devoted to reconstruction. Travel out of Phnom Penh reveals one of the weakest facets in Cambodian recovery - the very poor state of communications.

Roads are in abominable condition, mainly due to neglect, not war damage; and the unrelieved carpet of potholes reduces speed to 20-30 km per hour while rapidly damaging the vehicles, incurring financial loss which the country can ill afford.

Until the roads are improved, transport of either surplus food to the towns or commodities to the villages will be severely curtailed.

The condition of the roads also facilitates the sabotage current in the north, particularly between Sisophon and Siemreap. Nearly every night DK or KPNLF soldiers lay mines which have to be cleared each morning before traffic can resume; and to this purpose there are constant patrols of Vietnamese, with some Cambodian, troops, while every bridge has a permanent Vietnamese guard unit.

As they were in 1981, the roads could still have been repaired by available methods - manpower and simple tools. It would have required the assignment of road repair duties to villages along the route, a form of tax used in the past; but this was one of the things deemed impossible in view of the Pol Pot legacy.

The almost deliberate neglect of effective administration may have been unavoidable. Following the oppression of 1975-79, a period of anarchic freedom may have been socially and politically necessary.

Because of the freedom permitted, Phnom Penh and other towns are active and cheerful again, and people are healthy and smiling as before, but as a city Phnom Penh is still decaying, and the new administration seems unable, or unwilling, to risk taking the social disciplinary measures which would be necessary to avert the decay.

It will not be possible in the future to blame every malfunction or damage on 'Pol Pot.' The evils of the regime associated with that name were real enough, but they did not include a great deal of physical damage to the city of Phnom Penh or to the roads; and the PRK, now that the worst is over and physical survival of the population is no longer an issue, must begin taking measures to organize human resources more effectively for the country's reconstruction.

The economic paradox of a free market economy under a regime nominally socialist is paralleled in the political sphere by the dual

background of the administrative class, who are mostly bourgeois survivors from the Sihanouk and Lon Nol years or other DK ‘new’ people without previous political or administrative experience.’

The May 1, 1981 elections produced a national assembly of 117 members chosen from 148 candidates. Electoral circumscriptions were the 18 provinces and the two cities of Phnom Penh and Kompong Som; and the voters marked their preferences on a slate of candidates including in each case one or two more names than the number of seats allocated, which ran from 2 in a sparsely populated province like Mondulkiri to 13 in Kompong Cham. Interestingly, in a complete list of candidates published before the election, the one or two names which were finally not chosen were almost invariably at the bottom of each provincial list, with the only serious ‘upset’ occurring in Kompong Cham, where number 10 of the 14-name slate was the odd man out.175

Although such an exercise does not meet the criteria of election procedure in the advanced democracies, it can stand comparison with the elections of Pol Pot, Lon Nol, or Sihanouk; and in any case the main purpose may have been to demonstrate political recovery and security rather than an advanced level of parliamentary practice. As Lay Samun, Party Secretary for Battambang province, said on September 3, 1981, in answer to a question about enemy attacks and insecurity in his province, "Look, we held elections all over the province and the Pol Pot people were unable to disrupt them."176

In spite of the revolutionary and socialist nature of the PRK authorities, 51 of the elected deputies are of non-revolutionary background with the rest rather evenly divided among three categories of revolutionaries: 23 trained in Vietnam during 1954-1970; 26 former DK, mainly East Zone cadres; and 18 who began to resist Pol Pot openly from before 1975.177 Of equal interest is that 45 deputies are ministers, vice-ministers, central government officials or top military officers, 45 are Front or Party representatives, and each provincial delegation includes either the governor or the provincial party chief.178

Although revolutionaries dominate the cabinet more strongly than the assembly, 4 of the ministers - for agriculture, education, health, and information - are non-revolutionaries, up from only one, education, in 1979.

This development indicates both an emphasis on expertise over redness and a real effort at national reconciliation.

There can be no doubt, though, that reconciliation is to be in favor of a revolutionary line. In 1980, on April 17, “National Day,” the press announced an important official celebration of the 5th anniversary of the revolutionary victory of 1975, and implicitly, of the evacuation of Phnom Penh. The same was repeated in 1981, but given slightly less space in the press.179

The PRK thus puts itself forward explicitly as the heir of the 1970-75 revolution, arguing in exculpation for the excesses of that process

only that the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique perverted the original intentions.

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English

Except for the increase in the number of non-revolutionaries at responsible levels of government, there was little change in the membership of the central government organs. In November Keo Chanda, one of the Vietnam-trained veterans, was apparently dropped from his Industry Ministry post; but both the regime's enemies and its friends foresaw the consolidation of Vietnamese influence and 'Khmer-Hanoi' power led by Pen Sovan. Then all such prognostications seemed to go awry with his sudden dismissal on December 4; but the pundits have nevertheless found a way to maintain their view of the prevailing power relations by revising Sovan's position to Moscow's man in Phnom Penh while Heng Samrin changes from ex-DK nationalist to protege of Vietnam.

The immediate impression produced by Sovan's dismissal was that the pro-Vietnamese faction had suffered a defeat, either in favor of more nationalist Cambodians or of Moscow; and the latter view was still emphasized by Asiaweek as late as December 18. The Far Eastern Economic Review, however, preferred the explanation that he had "been the victim of his ardent admiration for the Soviet Union and his unyielding opposition to a negotiated settlement of the

Cambodian problem." This view had first been expounded in June with an analysis of Pen Sovan's political report to the 4th congress of the People's Revolutionary Party. Since that report has not been published in full, and without knowing the origin of the Review correspondent's information on it, it is difficult to judge the accuracy of that analysis. Certainly it is not justified by the summaries of the congress proceedings published in the two main Phnom Penh newspapers. 180

Some tension between Moscow and Hanoi over Cambodia cannot be excluded. It would not be at all surprising if some Cambodians tried to play a Russian card to distance Cambodia from Vietnam; and the Soviet Union could well have an eye on long-term use of the port facilities of Kompong Som. In such case the danger to Vietnamese interests would lie not only in a weakening of relations among the Indochina countries, but in the provocation offered to China. In the long run Vietnam must seek an end to the tension with China and increasing reconciliation among communist powers; and a Cambodian government which invited a strong Russian influence into Indochina would be as dangerous as one which sought to rely on Thailand and the United States.

Even though plausible, the Moscow-Hanoi rivalry theory of Sovan's fall must be very carefully examined, particularly since most interpretations of the Cambodian communist lineup since well before 1970 have been based on a belief in Vietnamese direction behind the scenes, and most of them have been mistaken. It would be of equal importance to know how Pen Sovan might have diverged

from his colleagues on important domestic questions, such as the organization of agriculture and industry, or on the way to resolve the conflict on the northwest border. The last point has been given attention in the press, but the position imputed to Sovan does not give support to the Moscow vs. Hanoi interpretation of his role.181

Outside the central government, communists are spread even thinner.

Several of the provinces had only one party member in 1981; and of the provincial party secretaries, only 4 are Hanoi-trained, 7 are former DK cadres, 5 are veterans neither trained in Vietnam nor associated with Pol Pot, and one has no revolutionary background. Few districts, the administrative unit below province, have any party presence at all.

Below this very topmost layer, the administration is staffed mainly by former officials, technicians, and intellectuals of the Sihanouk and Lon Nol eras, who were considered enemies by Pol Pot, demoted to poor-peasant status, and were one of the groups most in danger of execution.

During the Sihanouk-Lon Nol years such people were often in opposition to the policies of those regimes, were even frequently considered ‘leftists,’ and many of them were close friends and associates of the intellectuals who joined the revolution in the 1960s and '70s. They never, however, formulated a consistent opposition strategy and are probably unsympathetic to ‘socialism.’ In their

opposition days before 1975, they generally hoped for some kind of liberal regime run - in contrast to the Sihanouk-Lon Nol governments - on honest democratic lines and in which they could continue to enjoy the comfortable bourgeois status which a high school or higher education plus a government job made available for them. As a whole their group was very nationalistic, including the most virulent anti-Vietnamese chauvinists, and they are probably unsympathetic to the goals of the present regime.

Those who remain to work honestly for it may hope by their presence and efforts to turn it away from its proclaimed goal of 'socialism.'

The policy of the new regime to make use of those people is not just an effort at national reconciliation, although that is also a real and honest goal.

The small number of surviving Cambodian communists means that for the most elementary administrative tasks they required the cooperation of all competent people, of whatever political background. There was absolutely no question of a regime run from top to bottom, perhaps not even at the top, by party members and close sympathizers.

Likewise, since most of the highest-ranking and a majority of the most competent of the prewar technicians and administrators either disappeared during the Pol Pot period or have emigrated abroad, the pool of those left to be integrated into the new regime in 1979 was very shallow; and an interesting feature of the present administration

is that many people are holding posts of a much higher rank than anything to which they might have aspired before 1975. Former primary schoolteachers with less than complete high school diplomas run ministerial departments, and an engineer who in government service under Sihanouk would have been unlikely to rise above department head, may now become Minister in the area of his competence.

When Pol Pot was overthrown in 1979, the new authorities invited all such prewar intellectuals, technicians, and administrators to return from the peasant cooperatives to which they had been consigned and participate in rebuilding a new Cambodia.

The call was met with mixed enthusiasm. What most of them wanted after Pol Pot was a restoration of Sihanouk-Lon Nolism minus its corruption and inefficiencies, probably a utopian goal. Some refused to cooperate with ‘socialism’ or with Vietnam at all, and promptly used their new freedom to head for the Thai border. Others worked for the new regime for a while, and then, because of their political emotions, or because the hoped-for comforts of prewar bourgeois life were not forthcoming, or because of the blandishments of the Khmer Serei propaganda or the Voice of America, or fear that the new international support for Pol Pot would mean his eventual return, they also took the same road westward. Thus Cambodia, since early 1979, has lost to the refugee system in Thailand about half of its surviving doctors, perhaps thousands of teachers, and uncounted numbers of skilled administrators, technicians, and other educated

people, some of whom held responsible positions under, and were trusted by, the new government.

Such flight out of the country, which was massive in 1979-80 but is now down to a mere trickle, was facilitated not only by the suction valve effect of the refugee camp system and international propaganda in favor of Pol Pot, but also by the virtually complete freedom of movement and settlement accorded to the population since 1979. There were no serious obstacles to the hydraulics engineer or Ministry of Education textbook expert who decided to leave his job in Phnom Penh and head for the Thai border, and whose ultimate goal was resettlement in one of the western paradises about which he had always dreamed. The ease with which escape could be effected almost made it seem that the new government was glad to see the last of those whose loyalty to the reconstruction of Cambodia was weak.

Because of such ease of flight in 1979-80, those who are still left probably intend to remain and work for the new government, with reasonable loyalty if not with real enthusiasm. Their decision may be patriotic - to rebuild their country - or strictly pragmatic, a calculation of relative career advantages in Phnom Penh as opposed to the ever more precarious situation of refugees, particularly those without close relatives already abroad. What can not be foreseen is whether the inevitable tension between them and the communist hierarchy will be resolved in favor of an increasingly bourgeois order or whether, faced with the country’s severe economic problems, the technocrats will be won over to the goal of socialism.

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If the present regime is able to continue the same progress shown so far without being disrupted by a new foreign intervention, it is unlikely that the probable desires of the former urban bourgeoisie to return to prewar ways will be realized; and since the possibility of flight leading to resettlement abroad is ever more uncertain, they may be forced, simply to assure their careers, to prove their loyalty by efficiency and hard work. Otherwise those who have not been won over to the goals of socialism may find themselves displaced by a new generation of solidly indoctrinated and technically competent young people who will then be ready to enter service.

While waiting at Tan So’n Nhu’t airport in Ho Chi Minh City to board the flight to Phnom Penh in August 1981, I got into conversation with the leader of a group of a dozen or so Khmer youngsters, boys and girls, in a uniform of white shirt or blouse with red scarf of a distinctly East European appearance. They were ‘pioneers,’ and were on their way home after a month-long vacation trip to Hungary, which they had greatly enjoyed, in particular the spicy goulashes, which they found an acceptable substitute for Cambodian food. All were orphans, chosen two per province, and they were one of many such groups who go every summer to all the European socialist countries.

The children were healthy, obviously well fed, cheerful, voluble, and full of praise for the present ‘socialist’ regime of Cambodia. Pol Pot, Lon Nol, and Sihanouk seem for them to be nearly indistinguishable demons of the past. One of them asked David Chandler of Monash University if everyone in Australia spoke Khmer, and he countered with the remark that all of the non-Khmer but Khmer-speaking residents of Australia were there in the airport.

One girl then asked if Australia was a socialist country, and when Chandler said, “No, capitalist,” she gasped in astonishment and asked, “Then how did you get out?”

It is no doubt on children such as these that the government hopes to develop a loyal, efficient administrative structure, which it does not yet have.

One of the legacies of Pol Pot is hundreds or even thousands of such children whose families are either dead or broken, for whom life today in Cambodia is as day to night compared with what they have known previously, and for whom Hungary or the Soviet Union, friendly nations held up as models, must seem paradises.

The government clearly appreciates this fund of potential human capital cut off from its roots; and the organization of orphanages, creches, and day-care centers is superior to anything of that nature existing previously.

Where in pre-1975 times homeless children would have become servants or ill-paid unskilled labor, they can now become the loyal armature of the new state, free of the traditional family or class ties which were so conducive to the nepotism and corruption which plagued old Cambodia.

According to Keo Chanda, then Minister of Industry,182 thousands of Khmer students are now abroad in the socialist countries, studying technical subjects, and the first crop of graduates is expected back in about four years, to be followed each year by new graduates until the country has the technical staff it requires. Given their orphan cum 'pioneer' upbringing, they will no doubt serve more loyally and efficiently than many prewar graduates whose experiences in the West often alienated them from Cambodian realities, or inspired a taste for luxuries which neither they nor the country could afford.

That, however, is in the future; and the problems of the present must still be solved without sufficient trained personnel, in a pragmatic, often ad hoc manner.

The main domestic problem - economic recovery - has been evoked; but it does not lie, as might be imagined, in production of food, which is well on the way to self-sufficiency and eventual surplus. The much more serious problem is how a surplus is to be drawn off the productive sector, mainly agriculture, for export and investment. As in every society such surplus accumulation must involve more or less onerous measures imposed on the population - taxes, artificially low prices to producers, usury and peasant indebtedness, or

obligatory labor; and the Pol Pot legacy has made all such measures, even those considered normal in a democratic society, more than usually sensitive.

Cambodian peasants have not paid taxes, as such, since 1970, and will probably see no reason why they should, particularly since it might be many years before any direct benefit to them would be obvious. Usury and forced labor in agriculture are precluded respectively by the nature of the present regime and by the DK legacy, leaving voluntary sale to the state as the only feasible way to accumulate agricultural produce. This is in fact the method the government has so far chosen to follow, but given prevailing market conditions, it is questionable whether a price could be offered which would induce peasants to produce large surpluses.

This will be particularly true so long as the smuggling trade across the Thai border cannot be controlled, and that serves to emphasize the fact that all of Cambodia's domestic problems are exacerbated by its international situation.

On the northwestern border with Thailand the remnants of the DK armed forces and administration which were virtually destroyed and starving by mid-1979 have been revived, rehabilitated, and rearmed with indecent haste by an informal Chinese-U.S .- Thai consortium acting on the ostensible grounds that Cambodia has been invaded and an illegitimate puppet government set up by a foreign power. The two other anti-PRK factions on the border, Son Sann's KPNLF

and the forces loyal to Sihanouk, could never have developed at all without such foreign aid.

The international legal aspect is no doubt complex, but as I have demonstrated above, the PRK leadership represents a Cambodian political continuity older than Pol Pot, some of them formed part of DK, and formally it may be argued that they invited Vietnamese aid after constituting themselves as a rival government within the country. They are thus a rebel group which succeeded with massive foreign aid, just as the Lon Nol group tried to do but failed, and as the original DK communists did, although in the end with less aid from foreign powers. But just as the revolt of 1978-79 could not have succeeded without aid which the Vietnamese provided, so the earlier communist revolution might well have been destroyed in 1970-71 but for the Vietnamese aid they received in the early phases of the war.

Plainly, the international legal argument against the PRK is not only complex, but weak; and its hypocrisy is stupefying. Few if any of the countries now concerned with the Vietnamese presence in Cambodia showed equal concern over the reimposition of French rule in Indochina after World War II, or over Thai and non-communist Vietnamese efforts to destabilize the regime of Prince Sihanouk, or the extremely destructive American intervention between 1970 and 1973; and it-would seem that they are less disturbed by violations of the principle of independence than by a particular specific violation. It is clear that the problem for them is not so much the overthrow of Pol Pot by an external force, but that the force was socialist Vietnam. Had Thailand, in response to similar provocation, administered the

lesson, set up its Cambodians, the Khmer Serei, in Phnom Penh, and overseen the same progress as has occurred in the last two years, it would be hailed as a great victory for the Free World and its methods.

In addition to the rehabilitation of the DK forces, the effect of the international coalition against the PRK was first, to draw off refugees, including many trained people needed by the new government. The effectively open border from late 1979 has meant that anyone dissatisfied with life in Cambodia, for whatever trivial reason, may flee to Thailand, allege oppression, and find refuge. Such flight has also been encouraged by anti-PRK and anti-Vietnamese broadcasts from the Voice of America; and the international support for Pol Pot on the border and in the UN has caused many people to fear that he will return with the blessings of the international community.

Since it is so easy for the dissatisfied to flee abroad, PRK ability to impose needed taxation or other normal measures of social and economic control has been curtailed. The border operations also make necessary the Vietnamese armed presence, which is needed for defense, whatever Vietnamese intentions might otherwise be; and so long as that pressure continues, it is impossible to demand a Vietnamese withdrawal.

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In effect; a number of foreign powers are seeking to overthrow the PRK and replace it with one or more of several groups who have shown manifest incompetence in running the country in the past, and whose advent would most likely bring on another round of chaos. In part because of that the PRK, in spite of its considerable successes, has been rejected by the approximately 2-300,000 bourgeois refugees, many of whom possess needed skills, and probably by many other people still ostensibly cooperating with the government within the country.

Both the Cambodian refugees and the foreign powers are reacting out of simple anti-Vietnamese prejudice, and for the latter there are also considerations of international power relationships which have nothing to do with Cambodia itself, least of all with the welfare of the Cambodian people.

Nevertheless, a certain number of theoretical and practical arguments, even after the propaganda is cut away, have been presented against the PRK system by people who are concerned about Cambodia; and the most serious of these are found in the work of Stephen Heder. In spite of his earlier doubts, Heder finally realized that “significant improvement in the economic conditions and increase in political freedom and social equality inside Kampuchea itself” had been realized. This meant a retreat from socialism toward semi-socialist and non-socialist forms, “contrary to the expectations and fears of many peasants,” and was generally welcomed.183 In fact, it is clear from Heder’s descriptions that the

PRK regime has gone a long way toward the counterrevolution which the remnants of the old society wanted, particularly in the villages. It has not gone all the way, though, and the policies it has tried to follow have given rise to a number of interesting contradictions. The old urban elites and middle classes are alienated because the counterrevolution has not been complete, because Cambodia, after the destruction of DK, did not return entirely to the structures of the Sihanouk-Lon Nol eras.

More importantly Heder claims that the partial counterrevolution, the partial retreat from socialism, may have alienated in some measure both the poor and the wealthier peasants. On the one hand, the tendency of the new system to generate or confirm social stratification is not always popular among the lower strata, who complain that the regime has generally helped those who were already best off. The wealthier peasants, on the other hand, would like to see the removal of all remaining controls and a complete return to a private property system in agriculture. With seeming inconsistency Heder said that desire was also shared by the poor, but he then noted that what the latter "seemed to advocate was a kind of small-holder utopia, in which there would be the freedom of rural capitalism without its exploitative differential dynamic and the equality of socialism without its administrative coercion and bureaucratic restrictions."184 Such would indeed be utopian in Cambodian conditions and thus need not be considered among practicable policy alternatives.

Besides this, Heder also saw contradictions developing between the peasants as a whole and the urban traders, officials, and their patrons, the Vietnamese. The wealthier peasants would see the Vietnamese as holding back the full development of the private agriculture they desired, while the poor peasants would tend to blame the Vietnamese for rural restratification which was occurring; and together they would share an anti-Vietnamese, anti-PRK stance with the former bourgeoisie who work half-heartedly in the central administration and with the anti-socialist elements of many lower-level administrations who are opposed to the structures they are asked to organize.

At the end of his third study, then, Heder, in spite of the positive developments he had noted, still saw “a potential for widespread opposition to the regime and resistance to the Vietnamese presence.” He would also still seem to hold to the view that “Kampuchea under the Vietnamese has no viable political regime and no viable economy” and "is held together only by the massive presence of Vietnamese ‘experts’ and troops."185 That is, no matter how good things looked in early 1981, particularly in comparison with the previous two years, there were too many internal contradictions to permit the survival of the system.

The contradictions Heder describes have already been evoked above and are certainly real, although perhaps not all so acute as Heder would have them, but in assessing the desirability or survival potential of the PRK system, they must be placed in better perspective. What socio-economic system does not show

contradictions? At least half the population, more or less, is no longer considered, as in DK times, to be actual or potential enemies. So there is again stratification among the peasantry. It is almost certainly less than in prewar times; and even if we should agree that equality would be desirable, should it be imposed by brute force as was done between 1975 and 1979?

We must not slip into a 'damned if they do and damned if they don't' dishonesty. Tensions between rural and urban groups? Where has that been eliminated except by the destruction of the towns in DK? Certainly the inequalities between peasants and officials are now infinitesimal compared to prewar Cambodia, which is one of the reasons why many of the former bourgeoisie are opposed to the regime.

Heder is entirely correct, nevertheless, in remarks to the effect that a large Vietnamese presence may exacerbate any other contradictions that arise. Foreign armies always do, particularly when partisan regimes have for several generations inculcated a 'hereditary enemy' mentality in their people, a practice characteristic of the Sihanouk and Lon Nol periods. This is true even when, as in Cambodia, the Vietnamese perform tasks which are of clear public utility - guarding roads and bridges, removing mines laid by the DK and KPNLF, and defending the northwest border against those organizations.

And a foreign presence is irritating even when, as in Cambodia, their style of life is as modest as that of the local population and their behavior exemplary.

Although Heder is right to be concerned about the long-term effects of such a large Vietnamese garrison, his advocacy (n. 78) of increasing American military support for the enemies of the PRK can only serve to increase and prolong the Vietnamese presence and exacerbate further the contradictions which he claims to see in PRK Cambodia. Although it is difficult to imagine, Heder now seems committed to a full counterrevolution in Cambodia with the country turned over to the men now leading the Khmer Serei, in which case the contradictions Heder evoked would multiply even without a foreign military presence.

From a theoretical point of view it is perhaps true that the present regime is, in Marxist-Leninist terms, trying to build a variation of Vietnamese socialism “out of a situation of Pol Pot’s ‘feudal fascism’ or 'reactionary peasant/primitive communism,” or is "simultaneously leading the bourgeois-democratic revolution against (Pol Pot) feudalism (and fascism) and the worker-peasant revolution against capitalism and for socialism."186

Certainly such a situation is “historically unprecedented,” as Heder says, and in theoretical terms perhaps impossible; but the measures taken over the last two years and to be taken over several more years, including the laissez-faire market and general social indiscipline which I have noted above, should more fairly be viewed as emergency first aid for a basket case in a situation without theoretical or practical precedents. The Vietnamese and the PRK government have shown eminent good judgment in not rigidly

imposing any theory, in allowing for the present just enough private enterprise to stimulate basic production and trade, but limiting it to prevent the reemergence of the gross prewar inequalities.

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Not only does the PRK/Vietnamese performance look good in absolute terms, given the conditions they faced, but relatively, in comparison with the available alternatives, it looks even better. The deficiencies of the DK system and the general incompetence of most Khmer Serei groups have been adequately described by others, including Heder. Among them only Son Sann's KPNLF stands out by the personal qualities of its leaders; but as Heder notes, its vague program of private ownership seems to be little more than small-holder utopianism, in spite of which it has so far received little enthusiastic peasant support. Peasants who visited its bases saw that they were not better run than villages in the interior. "There was not more equality, honesty, or, even, democracy, freedom and security from foreign … armed forces." The KPNLF have preferred to concentrate on elites; and many peasants complained that they cared even less for the people than PRK officials, and that their foreign backers, the Thai, were worse than the Vietnamese.

It is also instructive to take note of the new program announced by DK. On December 7, 1981 they published a "Political Programme"

containing nine points each on internal and foreign policy. Five points of the first section and three of the second dealt with aspects of the anti-Vietnamese struggle, and thus set the document off from any comparable statement of PRK policy.187.

Of the rest, however, virtually everything is also found in the initial declaration of Salvation Front principles which have either been put into practice or are vague enough to permit varying interpretations: independence and freedom from foreign domination, human rights, non-alignment and neutrality, friendly relations with all, especially Southeast Asia (“ASEAN” in the DK statement), no foreign military bases (no doubt the Vietnamese presence is not interpreted as such by the PRK). The only substantive difference is that the SF/PRK consider themselves to be explicitly “progressing toward socialism,” while DK now intends to "adopt the democratic system of government and will not construct socialism or communism."188 In conformity with the last, the DK Communist Party, which “was founded to be an independent political party … particularly to fight against the ‘Indochina Federation’ doctrine of the Vietnamese Communist Party,” has been dissolved; and Ieng Sary, on a visit abroad, has declared himself happy with Reagan’s electoral victory and has stated that "we have given up socialism, at least for 'a generation, perhaps more."189

At best, then, the new programs offered by the Cambodian groups who would replace the PRK regime are little more than me-too formulations, offering what the PRK has already provided; and their records are such as to give one considerable doubt about their

sincerity and competence. Even the coalition of the DK, Son Sann, and Sihanouk factions formed in June 1982 is little more than a cosmetic layer designed to cover the too well-known face of DK, and it does not present any real alternative for the Cambodian people.

Although Son Sann's KPNLF contains some leaders of integrity and ability, it is itself faction-ridden and unable to control or eliminate corrupt elements. Their Ban Sangae camp has been the scene of shootouts and killings with the main conflict pitting a corrupt civilian administration against more honest military chiefs led, when I was there in August 1982, by Gen. Dien Del. Even he was unable to prevail over his corrupt civilian colleagues, allegedly because they enjoyed the support of powerful backers among the KPNLF milieu in Paris; and three months later Del was forced.to resign after the murder of a notoriously corrupt subordinate.190

The smaller Sihanoukist faction in the coalition is openly despised by KPNLF leaders, who allege that Sihanouk, as in the old days, has surrounded himself with incompetent and corrupt courtiers. Strong evidence to support that allegation surfaced in November 1982 in the revelation that Sihanouk's representatives in Bangkok had signed an agreement to allow a private Thai company to exploit timber reserves within Cambodia, precisely the type of caper which Sihanouk's proteges used to set up in the past. The project was blocked by the Thai authorities, and Sihanouk denied that he had ever approved the deal.191

In addition to the poor quality of his entourage, Sihanouk himself no longer commands the automatic respect which he once received from his people. Half or more of the present Cambodian population is too young to have a clear memory of the best Sihanouk days in the early 1960s, and their lack of interest in the Prince was apparent during his visit to KID on July 7, 1982, when only day-long exhortation by camp authorities and closure of all other activities brought out a respectable crowd to greet him and prevent the occasion from turning into a fiasco.192

Both of the non-communist factions admit that even with the maximum possible foreign aid they could not raise enough troops to effectively oppose the PRK and Vietnamese forces,193 and what they hope for is international intervention to once again overthrow the government in Phnom Penh, allowing them to replace it. That is obviously the last thing the country needs; and the PRK, at the end of 1982, still appeared as the best regime Cambodia has had since 1970, at least, and by any criteria better than what is offered by their rivals.

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### FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 4

1. See FEER, August 15, 1975, pp. 12-13, where rumors of such conflict were reported but then dismissed as improbable.

2. FBIS, January 3, 1978, DK announced break in relations December 31, 1977; and first Vietnamese report on DK border attacks and atrocities.

3. Yathay, p. 79.

4. S.S. interview, September 8, 1980, at KID. S.S. gave the name of another man who had been there and who could substantiate his story, but he left KID before I was able to meet him.

5. T.T., Nong Samet, September 1980; see above, p. 94.
6. Information from interviews by Ben Kiernan in Cambodia, 1981.
7. Ibid.

8. Asiaweek, March 31, 1978, p. 22, reported that in June 1977 there had been a Cambodian assault on Hatien along a 25-mile front. There was a mass evacuation of the population and those who stayed behind were murdered by the Cambodians, but "neither country ." .. publicly acknowledged that it was having trouble on the border."

9. See above, p. 136.
10. Ngo, cited above, pp. 132-133, said there was never any announcement.
11. Interview at KID, September 13, 1980.

12. See above, pp. 137.

13. Note the fairly close correspondence between this story and the official Vietnamese version as seen in Kampuchea Dossier I, pp. 71-76. The same information was filtering into western news media. Asiaweek, March 24, 1978, p. 18, reported "analysts in Bangkok believe ... Cambodian attacks in late September [1977] prompted" the Vietnamese thrust. Beginning on September 24 division size Cambodian forces struck all along a 150-mile border with Tay Ninh and on November 19 three Cambodian divisions invaded Tay Ninh again.

14. P.P., at Nong Chan. See above, p. 123.
15. The Vietnamese Kampuchea Dossier II, p. 107, places a major attack on Loc Ninh on July 26, 1978.
16. H.N., at KID. See above, p. 131. This confirms the official Salvation Front version of their organization, below, p. 203.
17. Interview at KID, September 1980.
18. For a former engineer in Phnom Srok, Damban 5, it was February when the first news of war came with arriving Vietnamese troops.
19. In Phum Touch, Khum Prei Khpos, Anlong Koy.

20. C.K., at Sakeo, September 1980. This informant, a former intellectual, had obviously followed the DK retreat, and although he denied it, people who had known him before 1975 claim he had always been a strong CPK supporter.

21. C.H., KID, September 13, 1980.

22. M.C., Nong Chan, September 12, 1980.
23. Ben Kiernan, "New Light on the Origins of the Vietnam-Kampuchea Conflict," Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars 12, 4 (1980), pp. 61-65.
24. Asiaweek, September 22, 1978, p. 10; September 15, 1978, p. 15, respectively.

25. For East Zone events see chapter 3, above; and for the view that the Vietnamese decision to overthrow DK was taken in February 1978 see William S. Turley and Jeffrey Race, "The Third Indochina War," Foreign Policy No. 38 (Spring 1980), p. 98; Masahi Nishihara, "The Sino-Vietnamese War of 1979: Only the First Round?" Southeast Asian Affairs 1980 (Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies), p. 68; Huynh Kim Khanh, "Into the Third Indochina War," ibid., p. 333.

The details on the Vietnamese campaign are from Timothy Carney, "The Conflict in Kampuchea: A Military Balance Sheet," Kampuchea in the 1980s: Prospects and Problems, a Conference hosted by the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, November 12-14, 1982. The same misapprehension of relative DK-Vietnamese strength was shared by the Thai. Supreme Commander Gen. Saiyud Kerdphol said in December 1982 that no one had foreseen such a rapid Vietnamese move in December 1978, and "we were doubly surprised by the speed with which Vietnamese troops drove across Kampuchea to the Thai border" (SWB FE/7204/A3/2, December 9, 1982, from Nation Review, December 7, 1982).

26. The three articles are: "Origins of the Conflict," The Southeast Asia Chronicle, No. 64, September-October 1978, pp. 3-18 ("Origins"); "Kampuchea's Armed Struggle, the Origins of an Independent Revolution," Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, Vol. 10, No. 4 (1978) ("Struggle"); and "The Kampuchean-Vietnamese Conflict," Southeast Asian Affairs 1979 (cited further as Heder, "Conflict"). In 1975-76 Heder was a very strong supporter of DK (see his writing in News from Kampuchea). His views have changed considerably since then, yet he shows no sympathy for the PRK, and any information he provides which tends to support a Vietnamese/PRK position is in spite of, not because of, his political preconceptions. See discussion below, pp. 212-225, for his position on the PRK.

27. Heder, "Confliet," p. 165; "Origins," p. 18.
28. Heder, "Origins," p. 18; "Conflict," p. 165.
29. Heder, "Origins," p. 18.
30. Heder, "Origins," p. 18; "Conflict," p. 166.
31. Heder, "Conflict," pp. 166, 172-173.
32. Heder, "Origins," p. 18.
33. Heder, "Conflict," p. 158.
34. Victor Delahaye, La Plaine des joncs et sa mise en valeur (1928).
35. Agreements published in Kampuchea Dossier I, pp. 123-124, and in Jean Morice. Cambodge du sourire à l'horreur. pp. 168-170.
36. For the latter see Sarin Chhak, Les frontières du Cambodge.l (Paris: Dalloz, 1966).
37. Heder, "Conflict," pp. 158-160 ..

38. More thorough treatment of this subject will be found in Ben Kiernan, "Origins of Khmer Communism," Southeast Asian Affairs 1981.
39. Stephen R. Heder, Kampuchean Occupation and Resistance ("Occupation"), p. 9, note 1.

40. The following is a summary sketch to illustrate the argument here. It will be discussed further in chapter 5, below, and for more detailed treatment see Ben Kiernan, work cited in note 38.

41. The Khmer Peace Committee, "Khmer Armed Resistance," mimeographed, October 1952, Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, catalogue no. 16°021 1287. Although the ICP was officially dissolved in 1945, I continue to use it as a conventional designation for the communist organization(s) of Indochina until the national parties were formed in 1951.

42. "Summary of Annotated Party History," by the Eastern Region [Zone - MV] Military Political Service; unattributed English translation, generously provided by Ben Kiernan (cited further as "East Zone History").

43. Heder, "Origins," p. 14; Heder, "Kampuchea's Armed Struggle," p. 2.
44. Kiernan, "Origins of Khmer Communism," p. 174; and see chapter 1, note 43, above.

45. In "Origins" Heder, who accepted the Pol Pot line on this subject, wrote, "under pressure from the Soviets and Chinese the Vietnamese

had acquiesced in the seating of Sihanouk at Geneva." Then having realized that the seating of Sihanouk's delegation at Geneva was due to the country's full independence, he wrote in "Struggle" that, "acceding to pressure from the Soviet Union and China, [the Vietnamese] failed to win either international recognition of the legitimacy of the KPP's resistance government or a regroupment zone for its forces within Kampuchea." Kiernan, apparently following Vietnamese sources, says the exclusion of the Cambodian revolutionaries was "despite the efforts of the Viet Minh, and sprang from the fact that the Soviet Union and, in particular China, came to the conference to make concessions to the Western bloc" ("Origins of Khmer Communism," p. 174).

46. See Jean Lacouture and Philippe Devillers, La Fin d'une guerre (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1960), pp. 140-141, 270-271.

47. The nationalist, anti-Sihanouk Democrat Party which had won all previous elections, and which after Geneva shifted leftward, was expected to repeat its success; and the newly formed Pracheachon, a Communist front group, was also expected to do well because of the support it had received during the anti-French struggle between 1951 and 1953.

48. The information about Tou Samouth comes from the confessions of Non Suon, one of the important party people arrested, and then executed, in Tuol Sleng prison, Phnom Penh (see above, pp. 148-149). The first documents of his confessions seem to be straightforward reminiscences about party history, rather than false

information obtained under torture to fit the requirements of a new party line. I wish to thank Ben Kiernan for providing me with the confession documents.

49. Compiled from contemporary newspapers, election results in the government Journal Officiel, and Non Suon's confessions.

50. In the document only initials are used, but there is virtual certainty in the identifications.

51. Heder, "Origins," p. 16. Thiounn Mum (Heder interview, August 4, 1980) claimed Vorn Vet had been a member of the Indochina Communist Party.

52. FEER, June 25, 1976, p. 26; October 21, 1977, p. 23.
53. "East Zone History"; Kiernan, "Origins of Khmer Communism," p. 176.
54: Kiernan, "Origins of Khmer Communism," p. 176.

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55. Heder, "Origins," pp. 4, 12-13.
56. Kiernan, "Conflict," p. 26.
57. Kiernan, "Origins of Khmer Communism," p. 177 .-
58. Kiernan, "Conflict," pp. 26-27.
59. Kiernan, "Origins of Khmer Communism," p. 177.

60. In July 1963 I was informed of their disappearance.
61. Compare Kiernan, "Samlaut," I, pp. 16, 30; II, p. 17; and "Conflict," p. 27.
62. Principaux discours et allocutions de S.A.R. le Prince Norodom Sihanouk, 1962, pp. 147-148, speech on February 15 ..
63. Kiernan, "Conflict," p. 27.
64. Agence Khmer de Presse, Bulletin, April 11-12, 1967.
65. Le Sangkum, November 1969, p. 72.
66. Non Suon confessions; Kiernan, "Origins of Khmer Communism," p. 168.
67. Kiernan, "Conflict," p. 27.

68. An example of error was the persistent identification of Tou Samouth as alive and active, and "president" of the party, as reported in Jean-Claude Pomonti and Serge Thion, Des courtisans aux partisans (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), p. 285, and repeated in my letter to FEER, June 2, 1978.

69. See Carney, "Communist Party Power in Kampuchea (Cambodia)." The two defectors were Ith Sarin, who published a book on his experiences, and Kong Lompon.
70. Kiernan, "Conflict," pp. 34-36; "Origins of Khmer Communism," pp. 175, 179.
71. "Heder Interviews," pp. 15, 18.
72. Kiernan, "Origins of Khmer Communism," p. 179; and interview, August 1981, with Lay Samun, one of the survivors who became PRK party secretary for Battambang.
73. See above, pp. 146-148.

74. Kong tap pathivat ("Revolutionary Army," newspaper, Phnom Penh), No. 22, March 1981.
75. Front d'Union National pour le Salut de Kampuchea, Service d'Information du FUNSK, Phnom Penh, January 1979.
76. Unless otherwise noted, the information on PRK personalities here and below is from Ben Kiernan.

77. For example, Kong Samol in Agriculture, Dr. Yith Kim Seng in Health, Chheng Pon in Information and Culture, and Pen Navuth in Education. See Ben Kiernan, "Kampuchea 1979-81," Southeast Asian Affairs 1982, p. 169. 78. Heder, "From Pol Pot," pp. 57-69; Stephen R. Heder, Statement before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, Washington, D.C., October 21, 1981.

79. See below, pp. 242-243.
80. See above, pp. 164-165.
81. See above, pp. 30-31.
82. Report of Sok Yieng, see above, p. 133.
83. Report of Pou Savath, prepared by K.K., KID, May 1980.
84. Anonymous written report, KID, May 1980. See below, p. 233.
85. FBIS and BBC, April 12, 1979.
86. See below, pp. 228-229.
87. CARE employee at KID, September 13, 1980; M.Y., Nong Samet, September 9, 1980.
88. K.K., KID, written January 1980, PAVN: "People's Army of Vietnam."
89. Asiaweek, May 11, 1979, pp. 19-20; May 25, pp. 29-30; July 20, p. 21.

90. "Solemn Protest of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front," mimeographed news bulletin, March 21, 1980.
91. Nation Review, Bangkok, September 10, 1980.
92. See William Shawcross, "The End of Cambodia?" New York Review of Books, January 24, 1980.
93. Ibid.
94. I do not consider either the rump DK personnel nor the Khmer Serei camp administrators as reliable informants on this subject, as will be demonstrated below.

95. Information obtained from international aid personnel.
96. Ben Kiernan, "Vietnam and the Governments and People of Kampuchea," Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars 11, 4 (1979), pp. 19-25.
97. See chapter 1, note 14, above.
98. Heder, "Occupation," p. 9.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid., p. 10.
101. Yathay, pp. 317-322, describes rumors of an anti-DK movement without giving it a name.
102. Heder, "Occupation," pp. 18-19.
103. Ibid., p. 60.
104. Let us not forget that all over the world, movement in border zones is often restricted.
105. Seng Chen An, above, p. 206; quotations from Heder, "Occupation," pp. 11, 21,26.
106. Heder, "Occupation," pp. 39-40, 45.
107. Ibid., p. 52.

108. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

109. Ibid., p. 49.

110. Seng Chen An, above, p. 206.

111. Heder, "From Pol Pot"; and Steve Heder, "Kampuchea October 1979-August 1980," Bangkok, mimeographed, November 1980 (cited as "Kampuchea 1979-80"). For above quotations see "From Pol Pot," pp. 45-47, 58, and "Kampuchea 1979-80," p. 103.

112. Information from Pr., Nong Samet, and H.N., KID, September 1980. See also Kiernan, "Vietnam and the Governments and People of Kampuchea" (above, note 96), for other evidence about treatment of Chinese:

113. FEER, November 2, 1979, p. 15.

114. Ibid., November 9, 1979, p. 41.

115. Asiaweek, October 26, 1979, p. 16.

116. FEER, November 2, 1979, p. 15.

117. Heder, "Occupation," pp. 30-31.

118. Ibid., p. 29.

119. Heder, "Occupation," pp. 30-32; "From Pol Pot," p. 22.

120. Information from Ngo, KID (see above, pp. 132-133).

121. Heder, "Occupation," p. 33.

122. Ibid., pp. 13-14.

123. Ibid., p. 29, on extravagance of the populace.

124. Ibid., p. 50.

125. Heder, "Occupation," p. 31; "From Pol Pot," p. 22; Asiaweek, April 6, 1979, p. 16; William Shawcross, "Kampuchea Revives on Food, Aid and Capitalism," The Bulletin (Australia), March 24, 1981.

126. Heder, "Occupation," pp. 13-15.

127. Ibid., pp. 17-18.

128. Ibid., pp. 120-121.

129. Heder, "From Pol Pot," p. 21.

130. Ibid., pp. 22-29, 31.

131. Ibid., p. 37.

132. Ibid., pp. 38-39.

133. Heder, "Kampuchea 1979-80," pp. 86, 89.

134. Ibid., pp. 96-97.

135. Ibid., pp. 91-92.

136. Heder, "Kampuchea 1979-80," chose rather to emphasize that one-fifth had not received seed, p. 100.

137. Heder, "Kampuchea 1979-80," pp. 101-102.

138. Ibid., p. 104.

139. T.T., Nong Samet, September 20, 1980.

140. Richard M. Harley, Christian Science Monitor Service, in the Honolulu Advertiser, January 31, 1981; Newsweek, March 2, 1981, p. 12; Barry Wain, Asian Wall Street Journal, January 29, 1981.

141. Heder, "Kampuchea 1979-80," pp. 104-105.

142. Ibid., pp. 105-106.

143. Ibid., p. 108.

144. Ibid., p. 111.

145. Below, pp. 248-251.

146. Heder, "Occupation," p. 21.

147. This is not to say that no school was ever taken over for other purposes, but that such was not a serious hindrance to the reestablishment of prewar life. Like every detail of the STV, it may have occurred somewhere, sometime.

148. Y.L., KID, September 1980.

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149. See above, p. 93.

150. Heder, "Occupation," pp. 20, 30-33, 111.

151. T.T., Nong Samet, September 20, 1980.

152. Above, pp. 127-128.

153. From written report of C.S.

154. M.Y., Nong Samet, September 1980.

155. See above, pp. 127, 132.

156. C.C., KID, July 1980. His retrospective assessment of 1979 thus belied the more extreme versions of the Cambodian emergency (American Embassy, Shawcross, "The End of Cambodia?"); and 1980 turned out better than he expected (see notes 140 above and 170 below).

157. Such disillusionment was still being expressed by Cambodian intellectual refugees and aid agency employees as late as September 1981, when the Khmer Serei consisted of Son Sann's KPNLF and Sihanouk's Moulinaka.

158. This was ascertained during my visit to Cambodia in August-September 1981.

159. Above, pp. 209-210.

160. Above, p. 97.

161. This first emergency aid was also reported in Asiaweek, February 19, 1979, p. 10.

162. Above, p. 103.

163. Pr., Nong Chan, September 1980.

164. Conversation at KID, September 1980. His DK experience in Damban 42 was noted above.

165. Information from T.T., P.P., H.N., Van.

166. FEER, August 31, 1979, p. 17. In view of the DK attempt to rewrite the political history of 1945-75, in particular the history of the Cambodian communist movement, it would not be surprising if they had destroyed the newspaper archives which contained much evidence against their version.

167. The old Buddhist Institute building became part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a new Buddhist Institute is located at Wat Ounalom.

168. In 1981 he fled Cambodia and in August was in one of the camps on the Thai-Cambodian border. A year later, August 1982, a recent refugee arrival who had been a member of the Party and held an important provincial post in the PRK government said that D's arrest had definitely been for malversation.

169. See chapter 1, above, note 74, for one example of anti-social behavior at KID, and on the Khmer Serei at the border see Milton Osborne, "The Kampuchean Refugee Situation," pp. 52-60.

170. Shawcross, "Kampuchea Revives" (note 125 above); Barry Wain, Asian Wall Street Journal, December 30, 1980; Richard M. Harley, ChristianScience Monitor Service, in Honolulu Advertiser, January 31, 1981; FAO, Office for Special Relief Operations, Report of the FAO Food Assessment Mission, Rome, November 1980.

171. See, for example, Sylvana Foa, UPI, Bangkok, May 8, 1981, in Weekend Australian, May 9, 1981; also FEER, May 1, 1981, pp. 22-23 and May 8, 1981, pp. 12-15.

172. In an interview August 28, 1981, Deputy Minister of Agriculture Mat Ly predicted a shortfall of 400,000 tons of milled rice, but by November FAO estimated the shortfall at 278,000 tons (FEER, February 5, 1982, p. 22).

173. Much of the following description was published in a series of articles appearing in the Canberra Times, October 22, 26, 29 and November 2 and 9, 1981.

174. Gunnar Myrdal, Asian Drama (New York: Pantheon, 1968), pp. 66, 277, 895-900.

175. Kampuchea (newspaper, Phnom Penh), No. 85, April 30, 1981, and No. 87, May 14, 1981; Ben Kiernan, "Kampuchea 1979-1981," p. 170.

176. Interview with Lay Samun in Battambang, September 3, 1981.

177. Personal information from Ben Kiernan. See his "Kampuchea 1979-1981," p. 170. All further statistical information about PRK, unless otherwise noted, is from Ben Kiernan's research.

178. From Kampuchea, Nos. 85, 87 (n. 175), and 94 (July 2, 1981).

179. Kampuchea No. 35, on the celebration of April 17, 1980, with reference to 100 years of struggle; Kong Tap Padivat ("Revolutionary Army") No. 5, April 1980; Kampuchea No. 83-84, April 16, 1981; Kong Tap Padivat, April 1981, p. 6.

180. Asiaweek, December 18, 1981, pp. 13-14; FEER, December 11, 1981, pp. 8-9, and December 18, 1981, pp. 16-17; Kampuchea No. 90, June 4, 1981; Kong Tap Padivat No. 27, June 1981.

181. For the latest well-informed discussion of Pen Sovan's case, see Ben Kiernan, "The New Political Structure in Kampuchea," Dyason House Papers, Vol. 8, Number 2, December 1981, pp. 1-9.

182. Interview in Phnom Penh, September 11, 1981.

183. Heder, "Kampuchea 1979-1980," pp. 84, 92.
184. Ibid., pp. 92, 109-111.
185. Ibid., p. 111; Heder, "From Pol Pot," p. 71.
186. Heder, "From Pol Pot," pp. 60-61.
187. Permanent Mission of Democratic Kampuchea to the United Nations, Press Release No. 105/81, December 7, 1981, Annex I.

188. For the SF program see note 75, above.

189. Permanent Mission of Democratic Kampuchea to the United Nations, Press Release No. 106/81, December 11, 1981; FEER, December 5, 1980, pp. 14-15.

190. FEER, November 6, 1982, p. 13.

191. BP and NR, November 27, 1982, p. 1; Asian Wall Street Journal, November 29, 1982, p. 1; BP, December 11, 1982, p. 3.

192. I was present in KID at the time.

193. Conversations with their officials in Nong Samet and Nong Chan.

## CHAPTER 5 The Nature of the Cambodian Revolution

Once upon a time, before the revolution in Cambodia, a European journalist visited the Phnom Penh office of an opposition newspaper which was believed to be the legal organ of an illegal guerrilla organization, in order to inquire about the organization, its leaders, and its aims.

His first question, about the leaders behind the newspaper and its organization, met with an evasive answer, and it seemed much easier to draw out his informants on the aims of the group, of which some of the salient points were: to lead the Khmer people to wake up, be aware, know their own and their country's value, to dare to face their own and their country's problems, to dare to work for the good of the country and the people.

They claimed to have created an army to fight to serve the people and the nation without accepting any foreign advisers or organizers.

They were developing the people - old and young, men and women - to serve the nation without thinking of their personal interest or rank.

They boasted of using the national language for all purposes, and of having developed new vocabularies for fields, such as diplomacy and military affairs, in which French had formerly dominated.

Other elements of their program were the suppression of physical, moral, or vocal oppression of one person by another; the suppression of all superstitious beliefs; the suppression of unemployment; the elimination of unused land and equipment; and the suppression of such moral evils as gambling, drinking, drugs, fighting, banditry, and (r-word for coercive, non-consensual sex).

They also gave much importance to the defense of the national interest through teaching people true Khmer history and inculcating mutual trust among Khmer, so that they would dare to fight, relying only on themselves. The name of their organization was Angka.

This interview did not take place in the late 1960s or early 1970s between a ‘New Left’ journalist and a front man for the Pol Pot communists.

The journalist was Dr. Peter Schmid of Weltwoche and Der Spiegel, the Cambodian newspaper was Khmer Thmei (“New Khmer”), and

the interview was published in November 1954.1 This paper was able to start publication as a result of the democratic measures imposed on Sihanouk's Cambodia by the Geneva accords against the objections of the king and his conservative coterie; and it was the political and intellectual heir of another newspaper, Khmer Kraok ("Khmer Arise"), which published from January to March 1952 and was then closed down following the mysterious disappearance of the man whose mouthpiece it was believed to be.2

That man, about whom Dr. Schmid was having some difficulty in getting information, was Son Ngoc Thanh, and the full title of his Angka ("organization") was Angkar tasu prochang ananikomniyum ("Organization to combat colonialism"), formerly Angkar prachea cholna ("Organization of the people's movement").

To the extent that Son Ngoc Thanh is known at all to the non-specialist, it is probably as a World War II collaborator of the Japanese and from about 1958 to 1970 as a putative collaborator of the CIA, and then during the Cambodian war of 1970-75 as a collaborator - and short-term Prime Minister - of the Lon Nol government. Even less well known is that he was the first important modern Khmer nationalist, an intellectual leader in the development of modern Khmer-language journalism (1936-42), organizer of the first modern anti-French political movement (1942), and a leader in the effort to modernize and democratize Cambodian society. During his years of nationalist and anti-colonialist activity, his enemies considered him on the left of the political spectrum. He was qualified by the French as Vietminh, and at one time by Sihanouk and Lon Nol

as “certainly communist … allied with the Viet Minh,” and "working with Ho Chi Minh and Mao Tse Tung."3

Implicated in an anti-French demonstration in 1942 he fled to Japan, returning in 1945 to become Minister of Foreign Affairs, then Prime Minister, of a Japanese-sponsored independent Cambodian government. When the French returned later in that year, he was arrested and taken to France, but was eventually released and returned to Cambodia in 1951 to resume political activity. His principal effort was directed toward the achievement of full independence, and he went about it in a way which cast aspersions on Sihanouk and the Cambodian political elite as being too opportunistic and uninterested in resisting the French. In March 1952 Son Ngoc Thanh and a collaborator, Ea Sichau, disappeared in Siemreap province and were reported by Khmer Kraok as having been captured by a band of Issaraks who were not known to be operating in that area.4

That was of course to cover those of his collaborators in Phnom Penh against a charge of abetting illegal activity, for in fact Thanh and Sichau went to the Dangrek foothills to establish a ‘liberated zone’ and work for true independence and revolution. Over the next two years Thanh was joined by numerous patriotic middle-class youth attracted by his high ideals and anti-colonial patriotism. There in the forest they established self-sufficient communities where they farmed, engaged in military training, and occasionally sallied forth to attack the Cambodian armed forces of Lon Nol. They also tried to bring modern ideas to the peasants among whom they lived and to

unify and reorganize the various Issarak groups scattered around the country.3

In retrospect they had little lasting success, but they were undoubtedly a catalyst which pushed both Sihanouk and the French toward independence.

They also attracted international attention and in November 1954 Nehru stopped at Siemreap to meet Son Ngoc Thanh,6 who in Asia was of interest as a combative nationalist both non-communist and honest. The interview with Dr. Schmid was a direct result of the publicity attendant on Nehru's visit.

Son Ngoc Thanh's movement eventually fell apart.

Full independence in 1953 and the new democracy imposed by Geneva in 1954 took much of the meaning away from his activity. Most of his young men returned to Phnom Penh, went on to higher education, and became teachers, bankers, or businessmen, while Thanh himself returned to southern Vietnam where eventually, working for the interests of the local Khmer, he became deeply involved in the American side of the Indochina war. It is obvious that the aims and principles enunciated by the Khmer Thmei representative in 1954 bear many resemblances to principles held by the Democratic Kampuchea forces, particularly as they were interpreted by the Pol Pot faction. Sihanouk, to be sure, has already said that the DK leaders used to be Thanhists, which for him is ipso facto a negative assessment since Thanh was anti-Sihanouk.'

Sihanouk's allegation, even if entirely true, is not very significant, since in a way nearly all currents of Cambodian nationalism, left or right, go back to or touch on the activities of Son Ngoc Thanh, and as 'Thanhists' at various times one could lump together such disparate figures as Thiounn Mum, Penn Nouth, and Nhiek Tioulong (although not Lon Nol, so far as I know).8 The putative former 'Thanhism' of the DK leaders is only interesting to the extent that some of their significant principles, aims, and policies can be seen to derive from or closely resemble the non-Marxist or marginal Marxist principles, aims, and policies of Thanh's political movements; and it is particularly interesting to examine such features now when the DK group have failed in their larger goals, have turned to anti-Vietnamese chauvinism as a raison-d'etre, and seem willing, even eager, to enter into whatever wild schemes the CIA may be cooking up.9 Pol Pot, since 1978, has nearly duplicated the shifts of Son Ngoc Thanh - from genuine revolutionary of the left to ultra-nationalist to intriguer in exile eager for support from whatever quarter it might come.

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I wish to suggest, then, that there may have been more that was peculiar about the DK revolution than the aberrant behavior of 1975-79, that some of its intellectual and practical antecedents may

have been unusual for a ‘communist’ revolution, and that discussion of the nature of the Cambodian revolution may be of general theoretical, as well as historical, interest.10

Above I indicated some of the points on which DK and Thanhist ideologies concurred, but this was not meant as merely a problem in intellectual history. The purpose is to situate the DK group within the political spectrum and determine the intellectual and theoretical sources of their disastrous policies. Were they Marxist communists at all? Serious doubts about that have been raised - and not just by the Vietnamese who call them ‘fascist,’ which within the context is meaningless.11

Policy depends on theory, and the results of policy, good or bad, may be imputed in part to the theory. DK theory had multiple origins, one of which was ‘Thanhism’ and another of which was Marxism. It is not easy to say which became of greater importance in the synthesis.

It is not enough, since the DK leaders call themselves Marxist-Leninists, either for anti-communists to say “I told you so” or for western Marxist intellectuals to beat their breasts in despair, nor is it enough, once the true nature of the DK regime was palpable even for the truest believer, to take the position that the DK experience could be ignored because such a regime was not communist in any genuine sense. That last view may be accurate - in fact, in my opinion is - but since DK called itself ‘communist’ from 1977 and was accepted as such by other communist powers from 1970 or earlier, the question of its ‘communism’ cannot be dismissed without

explanation, especially not by those of the left who before 1979 had defended Cambodia's communist revolution. It is necessary to analyze and explain both what DK was if it was not communist and why a non-communist regime would claim to be communist.

The latter, at the shallowest level, is rather easy - at least for all except those who consider 'socialism' and 'communism' such dirty words that no one not of those persuasions would adopt the names, or that adoption of such a term was sufficient to become 'it.' It should be clear today, however, that claiming to be 'Marxist' or 'communist' is of no more value in indicating one's true nature than claiming to be democratic. The adoption of 'communist' by a non-communist movement would be of a piece with the use of 'democracy' by Thailand, South Korea, or parts of Central and South America; and just as we would not judge democratic practice by those 'democratic' regimes, so we are no more required to judge Marxist theory and practice by the conduct of whatever regimes choose to adopt that cover.

Although there have been differences in property ownership, management, and distribution which prompted the choice of terms, nations newly independent since World War II have often chosen such terms for their affective value. 'Democracy' was popular in the immediate postwar years, 'socialism' a bit later with the development of Eastern Europe, and finally, more boldly, 'communism,' whether the economic structure or social and political policies fit with traditional communist doctrine or not. It is noteworthy that no new regime has called itself 'fascist,' in spite of resemblance to fascist Europe and

the acknowledged fascistic propensities of certain political elites. The obvious reason is that the term, if not the system, has lost all credibility and evokes strictly negative reactions.

Of course, today both the disparity among polities claiming to be Marxist socialist or communist, and in some cases their divergence from what the founder considered as socialism or communism, are so great that one might think the terms have lost all useful meaning, and that no analysis in those terms is useful.

Below I hope to show the invalidity of such belief, and the discussion of Cambodia to date, both on the left and on the right, has indicated that most serious observers still accord the terms some analytical value. Certainly a number of scholars on the left at one time saw in the Cambodian experience a new and uniquely progressive form of communism in the Marxist sense.

Samir Amin, seeing a revolution in a backward country after a form of peasant war led by a tiny group of intellectuals in the absence of a working class, believed there was a lesson for all of Africa. He said the revolutions there had failed because they didn't get allies in the towns. According to him the African revolutionaries had made false analogies with China or Vietnam and emphasized rural divisions, which led to failure. But the Cambodians, he said, being better Marxists, realized that they were neither China nor Vietnam, formed a peasant army, got the support of the workers and the dispossessed of the towns as well as the patriotic section of the bourgeoisie, and won. 12

Malcolm Caldwell noted that in spite of a minute proletariat, the Cambodians had waged a successful liberation struggle, and at the same time had taken major steps to elevate the living standard and all-round morale. He saw the Cambodian case as a model showing third-world countries how to break out of the network of international trade, with its transfer of value, and ultimately force changes on the capitalist countries.13

E. Thadeus Flood saw a humane potential of Asian agricultural communism to modernize without going through the stage of capitalism, adding that it was “not by accident that the most humanistic socialist transformations have taken place” in pre-capitalist and anti-capitalist milieux resembling Thailand, and by which he could only have meant China, Cambodia, Laos, or Vietnam.14

All three of those writers were conversant with Marxist theory and were familiar with revolutionary developments in the Third World, yet they were wrong on every point in the Cambodian case. Was this because they were poorly informed about the facts, romantically attached to a revolution as such, or misled because the Cambodian revolution really was peculiar?

Since, as we have seen, the ideals of the Cambodian communist movement after 1975 resembled in many ways the ideology of Son Ngoc Thanh, including the chauvinism which was an aspect of Thanh’s movement in its last phase and which also characterized the

Lon Nol regime, what were the specific characteristics of the Cambodian revolution as it developed under Pol Pot? Was it really a socialist revolution? Was it just a nationalist revolution following the objectives of Thanh? Was it purely a peasant revolution? Was it utopian?

The DK leaders apparently considered that they were making a communist revolution inspired by Marxism-Leninism. What should that mean, both in general and in the specific case of Cambodia?

The following discussion, then, must delineate the specific features both of a revolution in the Marxist-Leninist sense and of the Cambodian revolution and examine them for congruency.

Revolutions in the standard Marxist-Leninist sense are specific moments in the progress of society through a succession of materially determined stages proceeding logically and necessarily one from another with communism as the culmination. Each stage, or mode of production, is determined by its forces and relations of production and is defined by the way in which its ruling class extracts the economic surplus from the population.

A change from one mode to another tends to occur when further development of the forces of production is hindered by the existing relations of production, which must be broken, thus a revolution. As a result, a new ruling class emerges and extracts the surplus in new ways. This process should, in theory, end with a communist revolution which establishes a classless, non-exploitative society.

In principle a revolution could occur at any transitional juncture on the way to the final establishment of communism, although most discussion has centered on the transition from capitalism to socialism/communism.

This is no doubt because Marx was concerned first of all with capitalism and its transition, and because his analysis led to the conclusion that socialism and communism could come about only after a very high development of productive forces,under capitalism. That meant advanced industrialization and the formation of a large proletariat. "The revolution which modern socialism strives to achieve is … the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie … This requires not only a proletariat … but also a bourgeoisie in whose hands the productive forces of society have developed."15

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Thus for a long time little consideration was given to the possibility of socialism developing out of any other socio-economic formation, and in Marx’s day it was believed that socialism would come first to the countries of advanced capitalism, Western Europe and the United States. Further, since that capitalism had developed out of feudalism, historical-materialist logic seemed to imply that communism would develop only out of capitalism, which came only out of feudalism.

That last hypothesis has since gained support from the case of Japan, the only country outside Western Europe and the United States to achieve an autonomous transition to capitalism, and also the only country outside Western Europe where true feudalism has been recognized.

On the other hand, however, all revolutionary changes which have resulted in regimes termed “socialist” or “communist” either by themselves or by their enemies have occurred in societies which were not in the stage of advanced capitalism and show features, particularly in the political instance, which would have shocked the founders of scientific socialism.

Marx did take into consideration the possibility that non-capitalist countries, such as 19th-century Russia, could "make the leap into socialism from her particularly backward precapitalist condition:"16 He concluded that the Russian commune “might become ‘the foundation-stone of social regeneration’ … though only on certain conditions” - “only if there were a social revolution in Russia and the West,” "if the Russian Revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that both complement each other."17 That is, the high technological development which . Marx took as a precondition for communism would, through international integration, support the revolution in more backward Russia too; and the socialist relations of production of the Russian peasant commune would provide the basis for socialist relations in the entire society. We must remember, however, that such considerations in no way justify an independent leap to socialism by a peasant country;

and even within Marx's hypothesis about Russia there remains the question whether the communist relations of a peasant commune are an appropriate base for communist relations of an industrial society.

Engels later offered the same possibility for other countries "which have just entered the stage of capitalist production," but still "the example and the active support of the formerly capitalist West is an unavoidable prerequisite."18

The crucial features of the hypothetical feudalism-capitalism-communism sequence are that in the first an urban bourgeoisie appears in the interstices of the existing agrarian society and, living first by commerce, then by manufacture, develops the production of commodities for sale on the market, both domestic and international. As manufactures increase, more labor is required, and eventually peasants, by various means, are freed from feudal ties, separated from their means of production, forced to sell their labor power in the market, and become a proletariat. Capitalism has been achieved.

As industry develops further, the proletariat becomes more numerous and important, agriculture becomes more capitalistic, there are increasing contradictions between the social character of economic life and private ownership, and the proletariat takes power and establishes a classless communist society. In this classical scheme, we should note, there is no peasant problem at the moment of the proletarian revolution because agriculture has either become

capitalistic, or the peasants will soon see the material advantages of incorporation into large-scale production units.

Vulgar Marxists asserted that the above sequence was in fact a universal unilinear scheme through which all societies were fated to pass, and in their analyses non-western societies were forced into one or another of those modes of production, in most cases, for Asia, the feudal, meaning that they should eventually become first capitalist, then socialist. Such theoretical forcing, however, diluted the meaning of “feudal” to such an extent that it lost all analytical value. Both for Marxists and for many non-Marxists as well, capitalism in Western Europe clearly developed out of certain specific features of that feudalism, and if the logic of historical materialism was valid, the same capitalism would not develop out of other forms of ‘feudalism’ where those specific characteristics were absent.

The same could be said for the apparent ‘capitalistic’ developments in various Asian societies in the 20th century. They did not arise independently out of feudalism, were in many important ways different from western capitalism, and Marxists, at least, should have considered whether it was appropriate to call them ‘capitalist’ at all. One important feature was that even where there was a capitalist sector in the cities, the proletariat remained small and the population overwhelmingly peasant. Part of the reason for this was that capitalism in Asia was often not indigenous but was imported.

Early Marxists had never believed that Asia was feudal, but instead that it was characterized by a special Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP).

The crucial differences were that in the Feudal Mode of Production, land was privately owned by individuals in a multi-level hierarchy in which there were legally recognized mutual obligations, and the peasants were in direct relations with their overlords. Cities, the centers of commerce, could thus develop with some autonomy, and the concept of private ownership which was essential for capitalism already existed in the precapitalist agrarian society. In an AMP society, however, the concept of private ownership is weak or non-existent; all land in theory belongs to the state, which deals with peasant communities through appointed officials. The class which corresponds to a western feudal nobility consists of such officials whose claim to use of land or to income in cash or kind is at the pleasure of the state. There is thus much less scope for the development of commercial cities or the growth of a bourgeois class.19

Marx himself considered that western capitalism would smash the AMP and impose capitalist organization on Asian societies. Then, after communism had triumphed in the advanced West, the rest of the world would follow in its wake. So for Marx, and in the classic Marxist writings, the problems of indigenous transitions through modes of production outside the classic western feudalism-capitalism-communism, or the nature of modern Asian revolutions were given little attention.

Thus classical Marxism has no theory about the further development of modes of production (AMP) outside the western scheme, but unless the AMP were totally static, which it clearly has not been, we should also expect revolutions to occur when its productive forces suffer in the fetters of its relations of production. Such a revolution would be neither ‘bourgeois’ nor ‘socialist,’ and in assessing its character as progressive or not, the important point would be whether it led its society to a higher level of production.

Of course a revolutionary change, however much it may be required by historical-materialist logic, does not appear out of nothing, but occurs when a certain number of people decide to act in certain ways. Their success depends on assessing the extent to which the objective material conditions are ripe for development to the next stage; and since in the real world conditions never exactly reproduce theoretical schemes, the problem of voluntarism arises. That is, how far can a revolution be pushed when theoretically ideal conditions do not exist? A socialist revolution can not simply be decreed, and there can be no immediate jump from agrarian feudalism or an Asiatic mode of production directly into industrial socialism. A seizure of state power could occur before revolutionary conditions were ripe, but it would mean only a perpetuation of the old system under new management, or even a regression to a lower economic level, and would not be revolutionary.

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The question first arose in pre-revolutionary Russia, still then a largely peasant society in which capitalist development and formation of a proletariat had not reached a level which strict Marxist constructionists saw as sufficient for a social revolution; and the important contributions of Lenin to Marxist theory were in the voluntaristic forcing of a socialist revolution in a country which by itself was not considered by Marxists to be ready for it. When it was clear that no proletarian revolution would occur in the West to provide the necessary aid, Russia under Stalin went on to 'socialism in one country' with forced draft industrialization and rapid collectivization in order to squeeze an investment surplus from the peasantry.20

The same was true in most of Eastern Europe which became 'socialist' after 1945. Some of those countries were even more thoroughly peasant than pre-revolutionary Russia; and just as in the USSR, 'socialism' meant, after reconstruction of war damage, forced draft industrialization, proletarianization, and measures to force peasants into line - that is, forcing, under state control, the developments which should have occurred under capitalism. Although impressive economic growth, especially in industry, has sometimes resulted, the political systems have often been unacceptably repressive, apparently justifying the classical Marxist view that socialism cannot be founded on want and scarcity.21

The problem became even more acute as the scene shifted to Asia, where there had been virtually no indigenous capitalism, nor even feudalism, where the peasant character of society was even more pronounced, and where the surplus was still extracted by political rather than by economic means.

Whether or not Asia (or Africa, or the Middle East) fit Marxist categories, revolutions have occurred and will inevitably continue to occur, both because of contradictions within those societies and because of reaction against foreign conquest and exploitation.

Moreover, if the goal of those revolutions is ‘socialism’ and the elimination of class exploitation, a voluntarist path must be chosen since the material preconditions for socialism are so weakly developed - they are peasant agrarian societies with very little industry and a miniscule proletariat. There must at the same time be state-imposed industrialization to reach the level at which a socialist society is conceivable and constant attention to existing relations of production, for if a pre- or non-capitalist society relies only on the natural growth of the productive forces, some kind of capitalism, at least ‘state capitalism,’ with an unacceptable degree of class differentiation, could easily develop.

As the USSR and China have shown, there are real possibilities for progress in such voluntaristic moves toward socialism and communism, for many measures may be taken which release and employ previously blocked and wasted productive resources. There are also real limits imposed by, among other things, natural

resources and their existing development, the size of population and its level of education, and the degree of organization and social discipline which is culturally acceptable. At decreasing levels of any or all of those factors, increasing pressure on the population is necessary in order to squeeze out the surplus for investment and development.

There is thus a theoretically bottom level at which a voluntaristic jump into socialism is inconceivable and at which, without outside aid or integration into a larger entity, no more than subsistence agriculture plus handicrafts is possible. If we do not know precisely where that line lies, it is at least certain that a polity as small as a peasant village lies below it, and that a peasant country like Albania, without the considerable foreign aid it received, would not have survived as a socialist state. Of course if a peasant polity of whatever size were willing to forgo modern material culture, it could opt out and exist in a regime of basic agricultural communism, a course undertaken by certain fringe village rebels in Southeast Asia and which was open to Cambodia after 1975.22 On the other hand, Finland, which in 1945 was still a mainly agricultural country with a population smaller than Cambodia's, but which had an unusually well-educated and disciplined workforce and a core of high-technology industry, would probably have been as successful with socialism as it has been under capitalism.

For any kind of development in such societies, maximum use of both material and human resources is required. Wastage of either is dangerous, and the danger of wastage - in capitalist as well as

socialist regimes - is greater as the size of the population and productive base decreases. Embezzlement of public funds to an extent that would hardly be noticed in the U.S. could be disastrous in Albania, Finland, or prewar Cambodia; and in the USSR or China there was much greater leeway for demanding ideological purity in engineers or doctors than in DK. Whatever their goals, all revolutionary societies will be constrained by their basic material conditions.

Thus if Asians saw Marxism for themselves as a method of analysis and planning rather than as a unique outline for historical change, they were correct. If socialism, or any other progressive stage on the way to socialism, was to come, it had to be done in other ways than in Europe. Revolutionary plans had to be somehow based on the peasantry, not on the urban workers.

The counter argument, that socialism is impossible until after the developed West has been socialized, is in practice not acceptable, because increasing exploitation forces the peasant and urban poor into rebellion. Asian progressives have been right in searching for ways to use the revolutionary potential to build new, better societies; but still, if the material conditions are very low, the results may be worse than the old situation. Asian revolutions have and will come out of two main sets of circumstances:

(1) anti-colonial struggle and (2) domestic repression leading to armed struggle.

In addition to the expulsion of the foreign political apparatus in the first case, there are two main strategies in either case:

(a) make a bourgeois revolution in favor of local elites who will set out on indigenous capitalist or pseudo-capitalist development, or (b) go for the 'socialist' revolution straight away.

If there is a violent revolution or colonialist war, (a) may not work because the victorious (in most cases peasant) army will refuse to accept it; and in case of (1) where the conflict is resolved without war, the local bourgeoisie could well prove more repressive than the colonial regime, leading eventually to (2). As for (b), classical historical-materialist logic would indicate that the material conditions for the development to progressive 'socialism' are not yet in place and that the attempt would degenerate. But the voluntarism which characterized the Russian and Eastern European revolutions would nevertheless serve as positive examples of progressive though not necessarily socialist revolutions, and the political oppression attendant on them would be of less concern in societies where other kinds of political and social oppression had always been the norm.23

Cambodia was even further from the ideal situation for a transition to socialism than Russia, Eastern Europe, or China. There was very little industry or the natural resources to develop it, and the country was just about as complete a peasant society as could be found. Not only were its resources almost entirely agricultural, but its population was poorly educated and unused to labor discipline, and the only

resource that could be released for more productive use was unskilled human labor power. The economy was neither capitalist nor feudal but in the hands of a bureaucratic proto-capitalist class which pumped the economic surplus out of the mass of mostly independent peasants by means of usury and taxation.

The first revolutionary movement between 1945 and 1954 had been against the French for nationalistic reasons, and by 1952 a rather large amount of rural territory had been liberated. The independence achieved in 1953, however, was largely a result of pressure from the war in Vietnam, its terms favored the king and traditional ruling class, and the anti-colonialist struggle ended in 1954 with defeat for the Cambodian revolutionaries. It was thus the precarious situation of an anti-colonialist struggle, with the king and his mandarins retaining control and assuming credit for independence vis-a-vis the peasants, who remained quiescent for several years once the foreign rulers were gone and collection of taxes was left in abeyance.24 By the 1960s the demands of the urban elite led to increased efforts to squeeze a surplus out of the countryside, rural resistance was met with oppression, and revolutionary pressures exploded in 1967 in peasant revolts which may have been spontaneous, and from 1968 in armed struggles directed by the Communist Party leadership.25

Above I sketched the history of that party and showed that an original group of Cambodian communists, closely tied to Vietnamese communism, were gradually pushed aside by a group of young French-educated intellectuals who became the DK leadership, and that the PRK has been led by survivors of the early tradition. Now I

would like to offer a hypothetical sketch of how and why the second group took power within the party and adopted poor-peasantism and anti-Vietnamese racism as their leading policies- policies which proved disastrous.

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Even though sources are lacking and the following is necessarily hypothetical, two things may be assumed about the young people who returned from France in the 1950s and eventually led the revolution: they were particularly sensitive to the national question, thus less amenable to close cooperation with Vietnam, and they probably believed their superior education entitled them to rapid, if not immediate, rise to leadership positions within the party. Both inferences are in accord with commonly observed attitudes of Cambodian petty-bourgeois with higher education.

These inferences are supported by the circumstance that none of the returned intellectuals became publicly attached to the Pracheachon, the legal communist organization, and to the extent that they were publicly involved in politics, it was in the Democrat Party, an heir to the Son Ngoc Thanh radical bourgeois tradition, which they pushed leftward just before the 1955 elections in which it competed with the communist Pracheachon.

Although the old communists may have welcomed the talents of the returnees, it would seem that there was no thought of elevating them to top posts, and their efforts to gain authority must have been resented. Such resentment is expressed at two points in Non Suon's confessions,26 unfortunately not in his own hand but in summaries of his remarks made by his interrogators. There he is alleged to have said that the returnees were of the wrong class background - petty bourgeois or bourgeois, and that the revolution should be led by the poor peasantry and its representatives (the Pracheachon had chosen a plough as its symbol and was known popularly as the "party of the plough").

This rings true, in spite of the special nature of such confessions, and it shows the lines that the Pol Pot group would have been likely to turn to.

First, they would have to be equally or even more poor peasant-oriented than the Pracheachon, and second, they would have to seek tactical support among groups, otherwise revolutionary, who distrusted the Pracheachon's attachments to Vietnam. Such groups were the non-communist Issaraks and the Son Ngoc Thanh adherents; and such a stance fits well with their public activities in the Democrat rather than Pracheachon party. Their presumed anti-Vietnamese stance was very likely more than tactical. In their pre-university education in Cambodia they would have been exposed to a certain amount of 'hereditary enemy' indoctrination. Then in Paris they probably met Vietnamese communists who believed that

Laos and Cambodia should follow the lead of Vietnam in an Indochina revolution.27

At home again their anti-Vietnamese stance would have drawn to them former Issaraks such as Mok of the Southwest and Pok of the North-Center Zone;28 and their adoption of poor-peasantism would have attracted those same elements, perhaps put off by the too bourgeois or elitist character of the Son Ngoc Thanh supporters who otherwise shared the goal of overthrowing Sihanouk and the traditional elite. Mok was unexpectedly elevated to the party's Central Committee in 1963 over the head of his then superior, the Secretary of the Southwest, while Pok, who tried to settle down in 1957 after an Issarak career beginning in 1951 and 3 years' imprisonment, was again driven into dissidence in 1964 by government persecution.29 Heder's characterization of the Pol Pot-Mok-Pok alliance would thus be close to'the mark, but it began already in the 1950s or early 1960s rather than after April 1975.30

In the beginning all of its implications may not have been thought out, even by Pol Pot. He apparently, according to Non Suon, worked both with the Pracheachon, clandestinely, helping to draw up its statutes, and with the Democrats in their reorganization.

Having embarked on their path, its logic led to ever more extreme positions. Rebels such as Mok, himself a rural petty bourgeois in a poor-peasant area where there had been heavy Vietnamese immigration, would have been anti-Vietnamese and probably suspicious of all intellectuals, yet they would have recognized the

special abilities of the intellectuals for national organization and the political aspects of acquiring power; and to keep the support of such elements the intellectuals would have been forced to go ever further along the path of radical poor-peasant rebellion and anti-Vietnamese chauvinism.31 If they had joined the Pracheachon, they would have remained at second rank and been forced to cooperate with the Vietnamese.

To gain power they had to take up and then intellectually justify traditional peasant rebellion, which ultimately imposed its backwoods goals and ideals on them. Interestingly, that was what Regis Debray believed would have to happen in Latin America, where his scenario for successful revolutions bears many points of resemblance to the DK situation.

Where, as in most of Latin America and Cambodia, the working class is too small or for other reasons insufficiently revolutionary, the orthodox “worker-peasant alliance often finds its connecting link in a group of revolutionaries of petty-bourgeois extraction, among whom a large part of the guerilla commanders are recruited.”

"An isolated and humiliated peasantry accepts [them] … as its political leadership. During the struggle which awakens and mobilizes [the peasantry] a sort of provisional delegation of powers takes place. On the other hand, … in order not to usurp a function which is merely granted, this progressive petty bourgeoisie must … ‘commit suicide as a class in order to revive as revolutionary workers, identifying entirely with the deepest aspirations of their people.’ … the

small group of the initiated, coming from the city, gains daily experience of an agrarian reality which they meet for the first time, they gradually absorb its needs, understand its aspirations from the inside … and make of these aspirations their program of action."32

As in any peasant revolt, the overriding, perhaps only, well-conceived goal is relief from whatever has been perceived as a source of oppression or exploitation. In much of Eastern Europe that was the landlord class, and once a land reform had been carried out peasant movements lost momentum.

In Cambodia usury and indebtedness, not landlords, were the problems, and their ultimate source was the towns.33 Thus although we do not know who first conceived their evacuation, that act at once removed the peasants' burden and they must have viewed it with favor. That policy of Pol Pot's faction would have been much more interesting to peasants than a communist policy, as in Vietnam, which emphasized urban industrial development with many of the perceived exploiting class maintained in relatively privileged positions.

Of course, Pol Pot and company were not just peasantists, but also had a goal of rapid economic development accompanied by the elimination of private ownership of land and equipment, a policy, derived from exposure to Marxism, which has not generally been attractive to peasants. The evacuation of the cities and transformation of the urban population into an exploitable rural working class would have softened the nationalization blow for the

base peasantry who seem to have been left, at least in 1975-77, with de facto occupation of their land and possession of their tools.34

The realization of such radical goals could probably not have been achieved without the war of 1970-75 which so thoroughly destroyed Cambodian society. Earlier, when such an extreme solution would probably have been inconceivable, the first analysis indicating a path for Cambodian development, the 1959 doctoral dissertation of Khieu Samphan, who was to become one of the dominant circle in post-1975 DK, was specifically not revolutionary. It was neither Marxist nor Leninist. It called for development of an indigenous capitalism, cutting loose from the international capitalist network. Samphan wanted to disrupt through economic change, not violence, what he considered the 'feudal' old Cambodian society and foster a national capitalism. It meant an induced and enforced development of capitalism with a limit on free trade, and the intellectual antecedents went back, not to Marx, but to Friedrich List, an economist of the 19th-century German national revival.35 The peasant nature of Cambodian society was taken into account in that agriculture was to be emphasized and all industry was to be based on it.

Those ideas of Khieu Samphan, which were not inimical to anti-Vietnamese chauvinism or to peasant interests, represented an extreme form of voluntarism on the way to, not socialism, but capitalism. In a real transition from feudal society - with which Khieu Samphan identified Cambodia - to capitalism, a growing bourgeoisie requires the development of capitalism, conquers political power,

and then, depending on conditions, may impose restrictions necessary for autonomous industrial growth. Cambodia, however, was not feudal but a bureaucratic proto-capitalist development out of a declining Asiatic mode, and the ruling class was not bourgeois but a bureaucratic-royal elite whose preferred method of pumping out the surplus was not in the production of commodities by an underpaid proletariat but squeezing the peasantry through rents, usury, and taxes. In Cambodia private property had been instituted by the French, and the sale of land or its accumulation could no longer be limited by the formerly customary royal ownership. Cohesive village communes had long since been eliminated, perhaps in Angkorean times, leaving an atomized peasantry to face the demands of the state, its agents, or private commercial interests.

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The bureaucracy, still dominated by the old elite, remained the most powerful group in Cambodian society, while the small commercial and industrial bourgeoisie was largely foreign, thus disadvantaged, and at the top more interested in commercial operations than productive investment. Most of the surplus accumulated either by the bureaucracy or the bourgeoisie was then spent on luxuries, placed in foreign banks, or invested in Paris real estate, and when the Cambodian ruling class showed some interest in industrial operations, it was to manage them as prebends for maximum

personal profit, which was again used for luxury consumption, not further investment. The largest industries, after the 1960s, were state-owned and were given for management to bureaucrats who used them for personal enrichment.36 The few real incipient capitalists were usually squeezed out by the mandarins, and it would have required a violent bourgeois revolution, perhaps a la Son Ngoc Thanh, to put people of bourgeois orientation into power.37

Khieu Samphan's plan was not Marxist, and its failure was due not only to opposition from the Cambodian elite or to the war, but because he had not accurately assessed the real conditions within the country. The war (1970-75), moreover, developed in such a way that it placed the entire urban sector on the enemy side, making Khieu Samphan's plan unacceptable even if it had been otherwise feasible. Vietnam's advice to the Cambodians seems to have been classic Marxist: Cambodia was not ready for its own socialist revolution, should first cooperate in a Vietnamese victory and then follow Vietnam to socialism.38

Khieu Samphan's plan was also non-Marxist in that there is no Marxist strategy for moving from feudalism to capitalist industrial development without revolution, and a fortiori no Marxist strategy for moving from a non-feudal pre-capitalist mode to capitalism. Unless, of course, there is a state-sponsored development of capitalist industry, as in Russia. But in Cambodia it was too late for that. The ruling class was too much tied up in international commercial connections, and the peasants could not be exploited further.

The Cambodian revolution was not based on Khieu Samphan's plan, except to the extent that in peasant society agriculture is of first importance, and industry should be developed on the basis of agriculture and local forest and mineral resources. The DK program, with respect to Khieu Samphan's thesis, represented skipping a stage, from 'bureaucratic proto-capitalism' (Khieu Samphan's 'feudal') to peasant communism, and in Marxist theory that could only be a regressive path. Not only was Khieu Samphan's plan non-Marxist, but when the revolution finally occurred it was quite different from Samphan's projections.

The Cambodian revolution as it in fact developed, following seizure of political power in April 1975, was in contrast to any variety of Marxism, classical or revisionist, and to the practice of the earlier Asian revolutions, in that it was based squarely on the poorer strata of the peasantry.

In April 1975 the entire urban population, workers included, were demoted to the lowest class of the new society and with very few exceptions deported with minimal possessions, often to areas of extreme hardship, to perform agrarian labor. Although factories producing necessary goods or performing necessary services were not dismantled, and qualified workers in some cases were kept on the job, they did not form, even in theory, a privileged proletariat and were gradually, particularly after 1977, deported to the countryside and replaced by unskilled youth of favored poor-peasant background.

In the countryside, although formal ownership was abolished, those peasants who fell into the favored categories (base) generally remained in possession of their means of production, houses, fowl, and personal plots, and had de facto, if not de jure, privileges in food consumption.39

The urban population, wealthy or poor, were expropriated, totally separated from any means of production, and in fact forced to exchange their labor power for the necessities of life. The new means of production which were put into their hands were emphatically not theirs, but the property of angka, the 'organization,' and damage to which could result in harsh sanctions, even death. They were not slaves nor serfs but in fact a rural quasi-proletariat, differing from a capitalist proletariat in that they were not formally free to work or not. Even had they been given such freedom, however, their total lack of means of production would have forced them to work for exiguous wages. As it was, the surplus was pumped out of them by both political and economic methods combined.

Both those new rural proletarians and the somewhat better-off base people were organized into self-contained communities - villages, cooperatives - which had and were encouraged to have considerable autonomy to regulate internal affairs so long as the overall directives from the top were carried out. The surplus produced by these communities, given the total absence of money, was in kind, collected and sent to higher authorities, or in labor, and was both tax and rent. Some of the surplus was exported in exchange for necessary goods from outside the country, and the rest was used in

construction of vast infrastructural works, mainly dams and canals, and eventually to wage war against Vietnam.

Schematically, then, the basic structure of DK bears many traits resembling the AMP, and it is tempting to view what happened in Cambodia, in terms of a revolutionary transition in modes of production, as a transition from bureaucratic proto-capitalism to a primitive AMP in which a large oppressed class (the former urbanites) was regimented for the construction of new infrastructural installations, mainly waterworks, as in ancient Cambodia. Alternatively DK might be assimilated to a type of "Bureaucratic Collectivism," which Melotti identifies as the result of Asiatic societies' attempting a voluntaristic jump into socialism. Superficially the five principal features of Bureaucratic Collectivism seem to fit: (1) property owned by a class as a whole, (2) the economy run according to a plan and isolated from the market, (3) "the commanding position" occupied by machinery for the extended reproduction of use-values, rather than exchange-values, (4) direct exploitation of man by man, and (5) political and organic power centralized.40

In his discussion of Russia, however, Melotti shows that he implied something more, that the "need to force the pace on the road to economic development" involved the appropriation and utilization of the existing industrial and bureaucratic machinery of the old regime within the "machinery for the extended reproduction of use-values" in the new. Melotti did not even consider a case like that of DK, which is

impossible to reconcile with his Bureaucratic Collectivism, a progressive formation.41

DK, on the contrary, represents a precise illustration of Marx's view that "without a sufficient level of productivity, communal production relations would only result in stagnation and decline in the mode of production - from which class distinctions would reemerge."42 A return to AMP would certainly represent a decline, and new class distinctions did not just reemerge in Cambodia, they were imposed as part of DK policy.

Merely demonstrating that Cambodia regressed to a crudely formal approximation of the AMP, however, does not explain why it failed. After all, early AMP societies showed splendid achievements, and one of them in Cambodia itself, feeding the populace adequately and producing huge surpluses for construction. Why couldn't the same result be achieved in a modern AMP? Or if the extremely short life of DK is taken into account, why were initial signs of progress in that direction followed by such drastic deterioration?

The first reason was the economically irrational use of the former urban population, the one million or so genuinely city folk who had never lived on the land and who formed the major part of the newly 'released' productive forces. They were incapable of working efficiently when left to shift for themselves in undeveloped areas, and not only failed to produce much social surplus but may, even on their exiguous diets, have consumed more than they produced or died en masse, representing a drastic loss of human resources.

Those who were integrated into base peasant villages were also, for several months at least, a drain on resources rather than producers of surplus. It would have been economically more rational to keep them in the towns at enforced industrial, handicraft, or light agricultural work. Because of the dead weight of the economically misused urban population, and the enormous surplus that had to go into repair of war damages and the new irrigation structures which were planned, the living standards of many base people, the privileged class, were also squeezed, leading, if not in their case to physical deterioration, to resentment and increasingly unwilling cooperation.

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Another reason why the DK/Neo-AMP failed lies in the ideological realm. The extreme levelling down of the population to poor-peasant status, which theoretically was to equalize distribution, the asceticism in all areas of life, and the communal eating are not essential features of the AMP at any level of development and have not characterized any known AMP society; and they represent only a particular ideological tendency.

In any mode of production in which the surplus is extracted by non-economic means other than brute force, the success of the

extraction process depends on its congruence with custom and its acceptance to some extent by the producers as well as by the rulers. Thus in the Angkor period the extraction mechanism was bound up with religious practices and the temple organization; and production was undoubtedly seen as a duty to the gods as well as to the state. Furthermore, these old AMP societies grew slowly out of villages with slow accretion of custom seen as the inevitable and right way for the world to function.43

The Asiatic Mode of Production of Angkor was at the time a progressive social formation which in addition to luxuries for the rulers no doubt provided the base population with all that they imagined they needed and certainly with adequate food.44 It is an entirely different matter when an AMP is suddenly created by the overturn of all old customs and the tax/rent does not visibly bring any return, either psychic or material. In April 1975, after the end of the war, Cambodia's base peasants probably wanted to resume the lives they had known minus the exploitation they had previously suffered. They were also probably happy with a chance to exploit the city folk in return. They were certainly not happy about communal eating, excessive work regimentation, or the loss of ownership of their property; and they were probably dissatisfied when they realized that exploitation of the urban folk was not going to make their life significantly easier, that on the contrary they would eventually be forced down to the same level.45

To illustrate further the peculiar path of the Cambodian revolution, it is useful to draw some comparisons with certain other revolutions, both Asian and western. .

The Asian revolutions which are of interest for comparison are those which followed (b), a ‘socialist’ revolution as soon as national independence was secured: the Chinese, North Korean, and Vietnamese. In the first two cases, the economic successes have been palpable, both in terms of indices of production and general welfare of the population. In both also, as in the USSR, forced industrialization has been emphasized, urban development favored in spite of the rural and peasant predominance in those societies, and even allowing for dislocations in peasant life there have been great improvements in food production and distribution.

In the political realm, as in Eastern Europe, the record, for western eyes, is less enviable, although China, at least, has been much more benign than the USSR. The political system of North Korea, on the other hand, has been characterized even by a sympathetic student as “one of the most dreadful ever constructed in the name of socialism,” although too little attention has been directed to the possibility that it might be congruent with traditional mores.46

In spite of the vast differences in size, population, and previous level of industrial development which should make detailed comparison of doubtful value, some attention must be devoted to China since the post-1979 government of Cambodia and the Vietnamese assert that

the DK regime was a result of Chinese influence, in particular the Cultural Revolution.47

It is first relevant to note that in 1949, following the victory of its peasant army, the Chinese Communist Party changed its recruitment policy from emphasis on peasants to workers and intellectuals, city people, and launched a program of urban industrial development, the exact opposite of what happened in DK.48

The Cultural Revolution too, which is now being blamed for the evils of DK and which attracted a number of leading Cambodian leftists in the 1960s, was, in spite of a certain rhetoric about redirecting resources to rural areas, “an eminently urban movement. Its great political battles were fought in the cities … its main revolutionary actors were urban workers, students, and intellectuals”; and those Cambodian communists who most admired it were among the first major figures liquidated by Pol Pot.49

Since there has been some misapprehension on this point, both among victims of the Cambodian revolution and the foreign public, it may be helpful to review very briefly the structure of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in order to show that it is almost irrelevant for an understanding of DK.

There was a superficial resemblance in that the Maoist purpose was "the total reorganization and reformation of the political structure and social life of the nation - and moreover, the spiritual transformation of its people."50 However, “university students were

the first to respond to the Maoist call to rebel against established authority," and from urban university and middle-school students were formed the shock troops of the Cultural Revolution, the Red Guards. The latter then spread out over the country, entering factories and communes where they were sometimes "confronted by rival rebel groups of workers and peasants."51 During the course of such campaigns they attacked not only the capitalist-roaders, their original targets, but also regional and provincial party organizations.

Following that, in 1967, the Cultural Revolution moved into a new stage and "new political actors moved to the center of the political arena: workers and soldiers," but not peasants. As a result an underestimated factor, "the spontaneous social and political radicalism of the urban working class" acquired "a momentum of its own" that was not to end until 1968. Indeed one of the original 16 points of the Cultural Revolution was "seizure of power by proletarian revolutionaries" and the first attempt was made in Shanghai, China's most industrialized and radical city. Note that urban workers were to seize and hold power in the city and that their ranks "expanded when workers who had been involuntarily dispatched to the countryside in earlier years returned to the city [my emphasis] demanding jobs and housing." The Cultural Revolution "temporarily brought them freedom [from bureaucratic party control] to establish their own organizations and throw off old organizational restraints."52

Nothing like this outburst of student and worker rage against bureaucracy and party ever occurred in Cambodia, where the party

directed the poorest peasants against everyone else and where students and urban workers were ‘class enemies.’

Indeed during the Cultural Revolution “the countryside remained politically quiescent for the most part,” and “the vast majority of the peasantry never became directly involved in the Cultural Revolution,” congruent with the “desires of the leaders in Peking, whose policy was to insulate the countryside from urban battles.” The social transformation of the countryside, an ongoing goal of Chinese policy, proceeded "without … utopian revolutionary fervors."53

There were, however, gains to the rural areas from the Cultural Revolution, in the “massive revival of programs for rural industrialization” and “by the early 1970s, most of China’s rapidly growing output of farm machinery and chemical fertilizer was being produced by local rural industries.” “The cities … provided the countryside with the essential technology and technicians for the development of the new rural industries”; and "the results have been … the transformation of many peasants into full or part-time industrial workers; a substantial increase in the purchasing power of the rural inhabitants; and the generation of new capital for further investment in both rural industry and agriculture."54

The Cultural Revolution was thus on every point the opposite of the Cambodian experience in which technology was ignored and technicians from the cities transformed into peasants with no purchasing power or capital-generating potential at all. Nothing is more devoid of analytical acuity than the assertion that the excesses

of DK resulted from an “obsession … with the Chinese Cultural Revolution: having the peasants ‘re-educate’ the intellectuals” or that “the inspiration for most of the criminal absurdities perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge” lay in the Cultural Revolution.55

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Of much more relevance as a possible source of inspiration for the Cambodian communists was the Great Leap Forward of 1958-60. In its ideology - “a voluntaristic belief that human consciousness and the moral qualities of men are the decisive factors in determining the course of history, a populist belief that true revolutionary creativity resides among the peasant masses, and a particular faith in the revolutionary advantages of backwardness” - and in its desire “to eliminate the differences between town and countryside, between peasants and workers … between mental and manual labor,” there are clear resemblances to Pol Pot-ism.36

The “vast irrigation and water-conservation campaigns” begun already in 1957, in which peasant labor was brought together in brigades and work teams that “functioned with militaristic discipline to perform specialized labor tasks … as in a modern factory” seem clearly to prefigure what was carried out in Cambodia two decades later. In China too that type of work organization seriously disrupted traditional family life, even if “the most radical Maoists remained

firmly committed to the maintenance of the nuclear family … [and] tied to highly puritanical sexual mores”; and there were demands for "total abolition of personal possessions and for a general social leveling."57

There can be no doubt that the Cambodian leaders were influenced by what they had heard of those developments in China, but there were crucial differences in the application of the Chinese lessons to Cambodia.

The Chinese had been worried about "the evils of urban industrialization,"58. a concern in advanced capitalist societies as well, and there was a hope that it might be alleviated by industrialization of the countryside. The Great Leap was not anti-industry, nor were cities, let alone urban workers, seen as enemies. The Cambodians, on the other hand, wished to punish the urban population as such, the cities were not ruralized, but neglected and sometimes even destroyed, and there was then no way to industrialize the countryside.

If the Cambodians intended to emulate the Great Leap, they went so far beyond it as to totally change the content of their experiment. As for the Cultural Revolution, it was reflected in DK only in the contempt for certain aspects of traditional culture and the violence of the class struggle. One of the purposes of this study is to show that the former tendency appears spontaneously in certain objective situations, while the latter links not only Cambodia and China, but Iran or El Salvador as well, and is thus of little value in historical analysis.

The Cambodian and Chinese situations were similar in the relative predominance of agriculture over industry, greater in Cambodia, and the necessity to involve the peasantry as a major force in the revolution. Their paths after victory, even allowing for the brief life of DK, were almost totally divergent, with Cambodia taking only superficial account of the Chinese experience. Their similarities are shared by most of the other socialist countries - indeed by most of the Third World - and it is pertinent to examine certain of those situations in order to see how they were resolved and whether there was any contribution to DK.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) would seem more relevant to juxtapose with Cambodia. Its smaller size and population (about double Cambodia's) make them more comparable, the DPRK policy of self-reliance was shared by Cambodia, and the attention given to Korea in DK news broadcasts shows that the Cambodians were keenly aware of DPRK developments, perhaps hoping to emulate them.

Korea, after the war of 1950-53, restarted its revolutionary development from an even lower point than Cambodia in 1975. It was so badly destroyed that at one point during the war, U.S. bombers were grounded because no targets were left; and population losses have been variously estimated at 11-15%.59

Nevertheless, by 1964 a leading western non-communist economist could say that "all the economic miracles of the postwar world are

put in the shade by their achievements."60 Indeed the thrust of nearly everything written about the DPRK in the last few years has been that an economic miracle has been wrought, whatever reservations are expressed about the political system. The country has in fact achieved an extremely high growth rate and increase in living standards, and is almost entirely self-sufficient in both food and industrial production, including heavy industry and machine tools. Although foreign aid, both economic and military, played a considerable role, the Koreans made particularly good use of it and maintained their independence from foreign intervention.

Some of the crucial figures in their achievement are a reversal of the shares of industry and agriculture in national income between 1946 and 1970: from respectively 16.8 and 63.5 percent to 74 and 26 percent; and a rural to urban population shift from 17.7 percent urban in 1953 to 65-70 percent in 1975. Virtual grain self-sufficiency is realized on 17 percent of the land, using large inputs of fertilizer and irrigation. Beginning in 1946 there was a “big drive in education and a blitz on illiteracy,” which was of course essential to make a success of urban industrial growth and high technology agriculture.61

Except for the rhetoric of self-sufficiency, then, the DPRK took a path diametrically opposed to that of DK, much more ‘Marxist’ and emphasizing the development of all existing resources, human as well as material. An important, perhaps crucial, objective difference was that Korea is exceptionally well endowed in industrial resources; and that difference would have inhibited Cambodian development whatever policies were chosen. For Vietnam an assessment is more

difficult because of the war of 1960-75. Up to that time, however, socialist Vietnam was undeniably a success with growth of industry, self-sufficiency in agriculture, and decreasing dependency on foreign aid.62 Here also industry and its requisite urban development were emphasized, and such development, as in North Korea, was helped by a favorable environment. Such policies have continued since the war and if recovery has been slow, the inhumanity of DK has not appeared.

Cambodia clearly chose a different path from any of the Asian revolutions which could be considered either as potential models or relevant subjects for comparison. Cambodia also diverged from the paths chosen by certain non-Asian countries which started out with comparable structures and problems, which have made a greater success of 'socialism,' and of whose examples DK leaders were certainly aware.

Ben Kiernan once noted Pol Pot's visit to Yugoslavia in 1950 while he was a student in France, and commented on such an unpredictable step for someone associated with the then Stalinist French Communist Party.63

That visit, however, even if aberrant at the time in terms of his political affiliation, showed intelligent independent-minded curiosity on the part of the future leader of Cambodian communism. Yugoslavia, like southeastern Europe in general, resembled Cambodia closely in its pre-revolutionary social and economic structures, and the way in which communism was developing there

could not help but be relevant for study by young Southeast Asian communists. Of all Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, with its very small industry and the overwhelming peasant character of its society and revolutionary party, was of particular interest, and together with Bulgaria is relevant comparatively for the smallholder predominance in their agricultures and the very small number of large landlords.64

Also of interest was a circumstance largely forgotten now that Yugoslavia has become respectable in the eyes of the West: Yugoslavia's stance in the first few years after World War II as the wild man of international communism. On some issues the Yugoslavs seemed more Stalinist than Stalin, and they pushed their national interests to extremes. In particular they seemed willing, like Cambodia 30 years later, to provoke a major war over their territorial claims to Trieste, a matter in which the USSR did not share their enthusiasm.65

Besides those objective characteristics of Yugoslavia which might have attracted Pol Pot in 1950, there were other features of the country which, although it could not have been known then, prefigured almost point by point the situation in which Cambodia was to find itself in 1975.

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During 1941-45 the Yugoslav armed conflict paralleled the Cambodian experience of 1945-75 in that a double or triple struggle was carried on simultaneously:

(1) a struggle for national liberation against a foreign power,

(2) a civil war among nationalists, and

(3) a civil war between old and new regimes.66

In Yugoslavia too, the armed struggles, whether against the Germans or against non-communist nationalists, had been conducted in the countryside and were based on peasant support, while the towns were occupied by the enemy. There also the partisans, like the communists in Cambodia after 1970 (and in Vietnam), were able to preempt nationalism, while rival groups such as the Lon Nol regime in Cambodia were held increasingly in contempt.67 And Yugoslavia in 1945, just like Cambodia 30 years later, came out of its war suffering from massive destruction of both material and human life, with Yugoslavia's war death toll estimated at 11 percent of the population, greater than the Cambodian estimate for 1970-75, and only slightly below the more reasonable estimates for 1975-79. Likewise, most of the damage in Yugoslavia was in the small towns and villages, while "the bigger cities, held by the enemy until the end, were hardly harmed",68 and in 1945-46 mass starvation was only avoided through international relief, a remedy not available to Cambodia in 1975. In fact U.N. relief aid was more important there

than in any other East European country and "saved hundreds of thousands from starvation."69

During the war in Yugoslavia, most of the fighting had been in the rural areas and most of Tito's forces were backwoods peasants. Many of the old urban communist veterans of 1941 were dead. These new revolutionary forces were "unqualified for the complicated tasks of government in modern cities"; and the "townsmen … were suspect in their eyes because they had remained in the towns under enemy occupation. At best they were poor patriots, at the worst 'collaborators.'" The inimical feelings were shared by the townsmen, who despised the yokels, and "much of the confusion of the next year or two was due to mutual distrust and antipathy of these two groups."70

Following the war in Yugoslavia threre was a period of ruthless imprisonment and execution of class enemies,71 and in the economic sphere, "fantastically ambitious" conceptions of rapid development based on the "lavish use of unskilled labour on large building projects." It was "romantic planning … on heroic lines to outdo all others," and the results were to be achieved by bare hands and "working elan," with both voluntary and forced labor used on massive construction projects.72

Just as in postwar Cambodia, the Yugoslav economic policies of the early postwar years favored somewhat the peasants against the urban population, including the industrial workers. Most industry had been confiscated soon after the war on the basis of a decision taken

in 1944, although not on economic grounds, but because the owners had collaborated with the enemy; and there was no formal nationalization until 1947. In the countryside as well, the only important land expropriation at that time was from German owners in certain areas.73 Thus, although the peasants were favored, the methods used were quite different from what occurred in Cambodia.

In all of Eastern Europe at the time, the most urgent task was food for towns. Factories could not produce if the workers were not fed, and the peasants were not keen to sell unless they could buy industrial products. Nevertheless, “conscious of the peasant origin of their revolution and of fully half the members of their party,” the Yugoslav authorities did not attempt collectivization until 1949-50 when a food shortage threatened the cities.74

As a result of the early postwar policy, the peasants had more purchasing power than industrial workers and were able to dictate the terms on which food was sold to the towns; they could sell in the free market at very high prices and thus got the largest share of consumer goods produced by industry.

That this was a deliberate Yugoslav decision is shown by its contrast to the rest of Eastern Europe, where a policy of fixed agricultural deliveries to the state together with sale of the remainder on the free market had kept agricultural prices lower than industrial and maintained the price scissors between town and country.75 In fact, at the time the Yugoslav regime seemed to some observers to be peasant populist, with the nationalization of 1948 being peculiarly

‘peasant’ in that it was the townspeople who suffered, with even the smallest firms taken into state ownership.76 Eventually, shortage of consumer goods and attempts to get agricultural products at lower prices drove the peasants back to subsistence farming, which the regime countered first with enforced collectivization and then again freedom for private peasant agriculture.77

In Cambodia, we will recall, the peasant-city contradictions were resolved by destruction of the latter. The parallel with Cambodia continues in the organization of the Yugoslav Communist Party, in which half or more of the members were of peasant origin. Moreover, the party itself was at first concealed within a National Liberation Front and had a “peculiar penchant for clandestinity.” The Yugoslav party “for reasons which have never been clearly explained remained mysteriously hidden. Unlike the communist parties of neighboring countries, it kept secret the names of its officers, and members were not encouraged to reveal their membership.” In fact, the names of the party leaders were not published until the 5th Congress in 1948, and “even today lists of the first postwar rulers . … do not agree . … [and] some … themselves [are] not sure whether they were … permanent or ad hoc members [of the politburo].”

Such "behaviour certainly contrasted with that of the communist parties in all neighboring countries, and was hard to understand."78

In fact, one of the Soviet charges in 1948 against Tito, who had shocked them with the remark that the peasants were “the most stable foundation of the Yugoslav state,” was that the Yugoslav party

represented the peasants, not the workers, and had merged itself in the People's Front; and as Warriner adds, much of that charge was true, with Yugoslav policy resembling the ideas of the prewar peasant ideologue Radic, who said that peasants were to struggle against their exploiters, "capitalists, landowners, townspeople in general."79 In response to criticism, as Pol Pot was to do later, the Yugoslavs asserted that their revolution was unique and superior and that in fact they were the only true communists.80

There was thus much in the early Yugoslav experience which could have impressed a young Cambodian communist in search of a thoroughly nationalist path to socialism. We know, however, that Yugoslavia progressed in a completely different direction from that taken by Pol Pot's Cambodia, and it is therefore essential now to emphasize the ways in which Yugoslavia in 1945-50 differed from the Cambodia of 1975-79.

First was an objective difference in size and in the ways the two populations were divided by their respective wars. In Yugoslavia the axis powers had destroyed the old political structure, while in Cambodia it had been nurtured in the towns like a hothouse plant. Although the Yugoslav party had suffered many deaths and the old urban personnel had been replaced by peasant partisans, the leadership of the victorious revolutionary forces was still, at the top, of the old prewar international communist movement, thus comparable to the Cambodian ICP veterans and those who came back from Vietnam to lead the country in 1979.81 If they realized the

importance of the peasant masses and made concessions to them, they did not become peasant populist fetishists.

In Cambodia between one-third and one-half of the total population was gradually concentrated in the urban areas, nurtured by foreign aid and dependent on the foreign enemy, while in Yugoslavia, in contrast, the urban population declined, with many of the real bourgeoisie fleeing abroad. Beograd, with 409,000 people in 1938, had only 367,800 in 1948, in spite of rapid growth in the three postwar years, and the five largest cities held less than 1 million.82 In other words the entire urban population of Yugoslavia distributed among half a dozen centers was less when its revolution began in 1945 than the population of Phnom Penh in 1975, while the total population of Yugoslavia was twice that of Cambodia. Thus even though the reaction in the former country against those perceived as class enemies may have been equally fierce, the total of potential victims as well as their relative strength was much smaller.

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The Yugoslavs were also much more selective in identifying and punishing them. In spite of the anti-urban bias of the populist element in the Yugoslav revolution and the favored position of the peasants in the early economic reorganization, the post-1945 government was not opposed to cities per se. They were not

evacuated, and urban dwellers as such were not considered enemies.

Of course, the much smaller relative size of the cities would in any case have made it easier for the revolution to cope with them, but that is far from the whole story. The major subjective difference between the two countries was that the Yugoslavs, like true Marxists, placed a very strong emphasis on industrialization, and the country's resources made it much easier than in Cambodia. The Yugoslav version of "romantic planning … on heroic lines to outdo all others" and to be achieved by "bare hands and working elan" was not in agriculture but in industrial development, and it involved by 1947 a fantastically ambitious conception of a 400% increase in industrial production and an impossibly high rate of investment.83 From 1945-49 the population in the socialist sector (industry and other urban occupations) increased five-fold to 2 million or one-eighth of the total population.

In their lavish use of unskilled labor, both voluntary and forced, on large building projects, the Yugoslavs resembled the Cambodians of thirty years later, and they eventually ran into similar problems in achieving high quality results once the early stages of supplying a market starved of goods and building basic plants had been passed. But again, the Yugoslavs were constructing industry and urban infrastructures, and when they reached the limit of "bare hands and working elan," at the point where further progress required either foreign aid or increased coercion, they, unlike Pol Pot, found coercion

repugnant, and Yugoslav communism acquired its increasingly human face.84

The emphasis on industry, again in contrast to Cambodia, meant that technical proficiency, education, and intellectuals were valued rather than despised, and such people never appeared redundant to the revolution.

Finally, the Yugoslavs never let their nationalism turn into racism, either internally or in foreign policy. Their Moslem Turks never suffered massacres or gross discrimination, and the conflict over Trieste did not lead to hatred of the Italians living there or of people of Italian descent in other parts of the country.

The Yugoslav-Cambodian comparison is instructive in showing how the two countries, starting from similar structures and with revolutionary movements exhibiting the same peculiarities, could develop in such different directions, and the differences in the Yugoslav way were clear by 1948, that is, within a time span equivalent to the life of DK. They did not go the same way as the later DK because they made increasingly Marxist choices.

If there was any direct positive influence on Pol Pot in 1950, it would have been from the superficial aspects of the Yugoslav system rather than its basic structure - the massed labor, the independent nationalist fervor, and the attention to peasant interests. He did not absorb the facts that the labor was for an industrial base, nationalism never turned into racism or adventures of conquest, and

attention to peasant interests did not require transforming everyone into peasants.

A diametrically opposite case which illustrates the same point about DK is Albania, which Sihanouk was wont to invoke invidiously as an example of the fate awaiting Cambodia in ‘Khmer Rouge’ hands.

Starting with a population less than one-fifth that of Cambodia and with a more primitive economy and society, Albania had even fewer of the prerequisites for independent socialist or even capitalist development and was dominated by the same fanatic desire for independence as the Cambodians. The Albanians also felt threatened by their neighbors, the Yugoslavs, in the same way the Cambodians feared Vietnam.

The Albanian communist leaders, nevertheless, unlike the Pol Pot faction in Cambodia, recognized that their country was an economically unviable state and required foreign aid, which they solicited first from Yugoslavia, then from the Soviet Union, with a policy of rapid development of industry and modernization of agriculture. Apparently among the several factions of Albanian communists there was none who advocated peasantism or favoring the country over the city, although the peasant character of their society had to be taken into consideration; and collectivization of agriculture was long delayed. The favored area of development was always urban and industrial, and as a result Albania, contrary to DK, saw its numbers of educated people, doctors, and technicians steadily grow. Although coercion was never eschewed and the

political regime may offer little more individual freedom than DK, there has been clear economic and social progress, and because of the emphasis on modern sectors, ‘modernized’ people as such never became targets for elimination.85

DK failed, then, because it turned its back on ‘Marxist communism,’ and the economic failure of DK confirms the predictions of orthodox Marxism and of at least one non-Marxist agrarian economist who before World War II studied those countries of Eastern Europe which most resembled Southeast Asia. Doreen Warriner wrote that in order for the agriculture of those countries to be developed and to provide full employment and adequate food for the entire rural population, and of course for the cities too, it “would need major changes in economic organization, a degree of state intervention approaching near to collectivization.”

Among the things needed were irrigation, electrical power supply, and large-scale investments. Collectivization alone, she wrote, without industry, would not work, for agriculture alone does not provide enough investment surplus to maintain the standard of living as the population grows. And in what sounds almost like a prediction about DK she wrote, "where industry does not develop and there is no rural exodus [to industrial towns or in emigration], the condition of the farm population is far worse than it is in an industrial economy."86

Cambodia concentrated on bare-handed construction of irrigation works and collectivization without industry and serves as a model

illustration of the deficiencies she predicted. It illustrates what was suggested above, that there is a line beyond which revolutions of the Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese types cannot succeed, that voluntarism based on the development of communism out of peasant agriculture rather than forced industrialization, whatever the merits of the latter, will not work. Cambodia also demonstrates that not only were Marx and Engels correct in considering a certain level of productive forces necessary for the abolition of class distinctions, but that a certain minimum level is required to carry out a successful progressive revolution.87

What was, then, the nature of the Cambodian revolution? What label may be attached to it? Why were choices made which led to an artificial and unworkable AMP and the ultimate alienation even of its own privileged class?

What does a conjunction of peasant revolt with petty-bourgeois intellectual dissatisfaction mean in a pre-capitalist society? Some of the answers can perhaps be obtained through a comparative examination of similar instances elsewhere.

DK Cambodia first of all bears unmistakable similarities to a Utopia as, for example, envisaged by Thomas More: the rigidly egalitarian communism, identical clothes and houses, the latter of which are changed regularly; identical fixed working hours, mass lectures, communal farms and communal dining halls, shifting of children out of families, strict rules on sexual morality, no money, and contempt for gold.

Such superstructural features of DK, which are not essential to an AMP, are thus part of an archetypical intellectual baggage; and it may be interesting to note some other instances of such occurrences. In the real world, Utopian features have often been combined with violence; and the particular violent aspects of the DK revolution manifest echoes of Bakunin's anarchist program: "universal revolution, simultaneously social, philosophical, economic and political, so that of the present order of things … not a stone will be left standing"; "death to rulers, exploiters and guardians of all kinds, we seek to destroy all states and all churches along with their institutions and laws." Along with that the youth were to abandon universities, academies, schools, "and go among the people," and were advised to "not bother at this moment with learning," for "the people know themselves, and better than we do, what they need." All "means of social existence" were to be concentrated in the hands of "Our Committee" [sic, Angka] with physical labor proclaimed compulsory for everyone, the alternatives being work or death. As in Utopia all property would be communal and communal eating and sleeping the norm.88

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Both the utopianism and the violence were manifest in Spanish anarchism in the Civil War of 1936-39. Especially interesting was the

similarity of some of Spain's social and economic structures to those of Cambodia.

Spain too was an agrarian country, where expansion had occurred in space without changes in method or productivity, and it had a growing population which was catching up with the potential food supply. Industry was small, non-competitive, and dependent on a feeble internal market. The active political force was in the urban petty bourgeoisie and the army, which came from the same stratum; and they had to look to the state because the economy could not employ them. The peasants, before the war, were ineffective, attached to ultra-reactionary politicians, and hostile on principle to towns.

There was a curious absence of intellectuals, unusual in 20th-century underdeveloped countries, but "even educated Spain … was not a reading nation."89

Like the DK leaders, the first Spanish anarchist initiates were petty-bourgeois semi-intellectuals, printers, schoolmasters, students who set out to educate rural laborers and to organize schools where peasants learned to read.

Their moral standards were extremely narrow: they were opposed to alcohol and even tea or coffee, were vegetarian, and opposed to all sex outside of marriage. They were against all classes of society except the poor and believed in violent methods of realizing their goals.90 Only the vegetarianism and rigid opposition to strong drink

were uncharacteristic of Cambodia, DK or bourgeois, although excessive consumption of alcohol was a serious offense even for cadres.91

Part of the violence in Spain as in Cambodia came out of an old tradition of brigandage, which led to lack of respect for an enemy's life. They were thus proud of killing "Fascists," including non-combatants; and priests were regularly killed, their churches destroyed. Like Utopia and DK, the new order was to be very ascetic. They held money in contempt, and in Anarchist-controlled villages it was abolished and the inhabitants fed from village stores.

Although in those places the provisioning was probably poorer than before, there was pride in moral achievement.92

Like Pol Pot's enforced poverty and his references to the greatness of Angkor, the Spanish anarchist leader Durruti, answering a question about the destructiveness of anarchist policy, said, "We [the poor] have always lived in slums and holes," and know how. "We can also build," we "built the palaces and cities here in Spain and in America"; the workers can build cities to replace them. "We are not in the least afraid of ruins, we are going to inherit the earth."93

Because of its clear relevance for the Cambodian case, it is worth noting one hypothesis which has been offered for the violence of the Spanish scene.

According to this explanatory sketch, it is little wonder that the proletarians and peasants resorted to violence and favored utopian schemes such as anarchism. Half-starved and with a bitter hatred for their superiors, the peasants in particular, once aroused, were revengeful and destroyed everything in their path. In the past, peasant uprisings were frequent and left a path of carnage and pillage in their wake, but because they were usually unorganized so that the whole countryside rarely rose at one time, they were easily suppressed by the authorities.94 Although prewar Cambodian peasants were never half-starved, they often hated their superiors, and once aroused were indeed revengeful, destroying everything in their path. Moreover, they were organized in 1970-75, and if the whole country did not rise at once, large enough areas did to ensure eventual victory.

If that explanation be accepted, Spanish violence cannot be imputed merely to the Bakuninist tradition (outside influence) to which some anarchist leaders were heir;95 and moreover the same features have appeared indigenously in other contexts besides Cambodia, indicating that they may emerge anywhere certain conditions prevail.

In Russia, considering only the modern period from the end of the 19th century, we find rebel peasant behavior very much like that of the Spanish rural anarchists.

During the famine of 1891 “peasants in their … misery repulsed attempts to help them and even killed doctors as ‘poisoners,’” events

which convinced Plekhanov that it would be futile to rely on peasants for organized political action.96

In the 1905 revolution there were peasant revolts which were separate from and more aggressive than the urban movement. Thus in one place a schoolteacher and clerk, like the petty-bourgeoisie of Spanish anarchism, organized a peasant union, urging occupation of landlords' land and refusal to pay taxes; in another province a veterinarian led a peasant movement which organized its own militia, instituted an elective clergy in place of the official priests, and turned churches into schools and hospitals. At a national meeting of Peasant Union members, local peasant delegates were much more radical than the central leadership and "clamored for the use of violence and the seizure and partition of land without compensation."97

There were similar developments in 1917 when "the peasants were becoming more and more radical in their demands, far outpacing … their more cautious urban spokesmen." Moreover, in an initial revolutionary enthusiasm, some peasants even voluntarily entered egalitarian communes in which members worked without pay, had common meals, lived in dormitories, and had no use for money or any individual property other than clothing.98

As in Cambodia later on, 'leftist' intellectuals also faced the unpleasant consequences of spontaneous peasant revolt. During the October Revolution some of the leaders of the Socialist Revolutionary (SR) Party, who represented the peasants, were

arrested in St. Petersburg by a group of soldiers and sailors and nearly killed, even though some of the latter were also SRs. When reproached for such treatment of ‘party comrades,’ the assailants replied, “this is revolution - all are now equal,” evidently considering that urban gentlemen were strange comrades for ordinary soldiers or peasants. "The simple people had taken the party teachings at face value … their socialism may be questioned, but not their levelling instincts."99

Such violent peasant anarchism appeared even more clearly in the Tambov uprising, a revolution within the Russian Revolution which threatened Bolshevik control in a large area of Central Russia in 1920-21. This ‘green’ movement was spontaneous action without ideology, by peasants, who wanted the land and its produce for themselves and in whose consciousness “intuition and feeling took the place of ideology.” It was a peasant revolution to preserve peasant ways, free from the encroachment of towns and government. It was “naked guerilla warfare, without slogans, without ideas, without program.” The rebels were not fundamentally opposed to communism; and in the words of their historian they wanted both the February and October Revolutions, but without the war associated with the former and “without the food levy, the communes, and the state farms” of the latter.100

Radkey also speculated on what the Russian Revolution would have been if the SRs, instead of the Bolsheviks, had won with the support of the "Green bands and their leaders."101 The latter, he believed, would not have dissolved and, against the bourgeois nationalism of

the urban SR leaders, would have, for one thing, “insisted that only officers from the depths of the people and of proven dedication to its cause could be entrusted with the creation of the new Russian army” - in contrast to a policy of rebuilding the army with reorganized officers of the old army as the SRs proposed, and as even the Bolsheviks were willing to consider.

What that might have led to can be seen from the action of Antonov, the Tambov ‘Green’ leader, who decided that all officers from the old army were as such unreliable and had all those who had joined him against the Bolsheviks killed.102 Thus Russia, under the SRs and a ‘Green’ peasant army, might well have experienced, like post-1975 Cambodia, massacres far worse than anything which occurred under the Bolsheviks. Moreover, Radkey emphasized in gruesome detail the atrocities that were regularly perpetrated by the peasant rebels. Precisely as depicted in the Cambodian STV, but here apparently without need of revision, “they were capable of actions that explored the ultimate recesses of all that is fiendish in human nature.” They killed en masse, sometimes “even the young and the aged,” and “an assortment of tortures, crude and refined, accompanied these killings.” Even peasant children were encouraged by their elders to become torturers and executioners.103

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Closer to home, the rebellious peasants of Nghe-Tinh, Vietnam, in 1930-31, in the face of brutal repression “also turned inward [in addition to combat against their enemies], demanding more rice and money from wealthy villagers, imprisoning and in some cases torturing their own leaders - including Communist Party members - who happened to be of landlord or rich-peasant background.” That was very much like Pol Pot-ism at its worst and is a valuable indication of where the source of such excesses lies, in poor-peasant frustration, not Marxism-Leninism. Those Vietnamese peasants also showed considerable organizational talents, and in contrast to what happened in Cambodia after 1975, the Vietnamese communists took measures to avoid poor-peasant excesses in the future.

They tried to convince the poor peasants “not to alienate everyone in the village who was better off than they,” since “by severely harassing even middle peasants … [they] had exacerbated internal differences and made it easier for the French to restore local control,” not to mention that “city folk were shocked at stories of roving peasant gangs arbitrarily confiscating private property.” Although the Vietnamese party “took on the aura of champion of the rural poor,” it "discouraged poor peasants from confiscating landlord properties and made no secret of its ultimate objective of land socialization."104

In non-violent situations as well, the special character of peasant politics has been emphasized by a pro-peasant economic historian of Eastern Europe. Between the world wars the Croatian peasant leader Stepan Radic “looked upon those who worked the land as

having a special right to govern"; in 1933 the Polish People's Party held that the "rural population are justified in regarding themselves as the national masters of Poland," and they looked upon the village community, rather than the individual, as the proper unit of government; and for the Serbian Peasant Party, "all privileges possessed by the towns at the expense of the villages must be abolished."

Those positions illustrate that one of the "most potent and general traits" of a peasant revival is "resentment against the towns, against their ways and their power"; and if the life of capital cities loses its glitter, peasant leaders like nothing better.

In Eastern Europe "they often spoke with the passion of rural Savonarolas against the corrupting and oppressive domination of the towns," even seeing industrial workers as part of the oppressive towns.105

Another specialist in Eastern European affairs wrote that the peasant parties had no belief in social progress; once they secured the land reforms they desired, they would become conservative and nationalist. Radic, and in Bulgaria Alexander Stamboliski, preached 'peasant democracy' "in the sense of a primitive agrarian socialism, directed against the towns as the exploiters of the peasantry." Their goal was not only anti-urban but static, in that once the peasants had land there was no further mainspring for progress.106

Modern scholarship has put a name to movements showing the common characteristics of the Cambodian Revolution and the European experiences evoked above. The name is ‘Populism,’ (narodnism) particularly in its peasant variety; and a composite description of peasant populism drawn from several writers reads like an almost point-by-point description of Democratic Kampuchea.107

Populism in this view is a non-intellectual or anti-intellectual ideology coalescing in periods of absolute or relative deprivation of a rural population.

It shows a conservative utopianism, a belief in the sacredness of the soil and those who till it, in the quality of the status of all cultivators, a belief that their virtue is endangered by the workings of active, alien, urban vice. It is apolitical, without a bias for a sustained political party, and its program is one of rough revenge of the verities of the soil on the alien and sophisticated.

It proclaims a sacrifice of freedom in the interests of moral uniformity. There is a distrust of state and bureaucracy, and peasant populists would minimize them before the rights and virtues of local communities.

Another writer ascribed two cardinal principles to populism: the supremacy of the will of ‘the people’ over every other standard, including traditional institutions, and over the will of other strata; and the desirability of a direct relationship between people and

leadership, unmediated by institutions. “Such styles of popular participation … are generally accompanied by a quasi-religious belief in the virtues of the uncorrupted, simple, common folk, and a converse distrust of the … effete … aristocratic, idle, wealthy, functionally unnecessary and basically degenerate or corrupt.” Populism "involves distrust of the ‘over-educated’ … hates the civil service … is hostile to the politician … ‘seeks substantive justice,’ and ‘cares not at all’ for traditional rules or legal systems."108

Those components of populism fit particularly well the peasantist variety, and “pure peasant protest,” according to Worsley, without the mediation of city-based intellectuals or workers, "is generally a story of blind and sporadic violence, of betrayal, inability to organize, susceptibility to political counter-attack and treachery, and is ultimately a record of disaster, repression, and counter-butchery, of jacqueries and la violencia rather than of successful revolution."109

These general considerations of peasant populism are illustrated by some of the Eastern European peasant parties between the world wars. “The general philosophy of the peasant party doctrine was still based on the belief in the natural superiority of the peasants’ way of life and of the rural society over the urban life of both bourgeois and industrial workers.” This belief, which held that peasant life was the source of “physical well-being and moral regeneration,” was not just backwoods prejudice but was apparently shared by an intellectual of the stature of Pitrim Sorokin, who, more than Marx, could have served as mentor to the DK leaders, had they heard of him.

The most radical of the East European peasantists were the Bulgarian, under Stamboliski, in a country of comparable size and development to Cambodia, with a similar relatively even distribution of land ownership, and likewise without a severe problem of agricultural overpopulation. Stamboliski's positions, like those of Pol Pot, Khieu Samphan, and Mok, "were exclusive and reactionary" and his methods "drastic and revolutionary." He "hated the towns and both its categories of inhabitants, bourgeois and industrial workers alike … [and] was … deeply convinced that the mission of the government of the will of the (peasant) people was to perpetuate forever and to extend everywhere the rural conception of life." "Only the secondary industries which were of use to the countryside should be encouraged and allowed to grow."110

The major difference between the East European peasantists and the DK ideologues was that the former held firmly to a goal of individual small peasant ownership of the land, while the latter were collectivists long before the war of 1970-75.111 Had it not been for the war which destroyed most of the central agricultural area of Cambodia where small peasant ownership was most feasible, they might not have been able to impose that goal on the peasant masses whom they led to victory.

The excesses of DK, then, did not spring forth from the brains of Pol Pot or Khieu Samphan and are certainly not because they "learned their revolutionary theory in Paris."112 Nor were those excesses the result of reading, or misreading, Marx or due to Stalinist or Maoist influences. They lay in the very nature of a peasant revolution, which

was the only kind of revolution possible in Cambodia. As much as, perhaps even more than, any other modern revolution, it was a working out of strictly local contradictions, which differed from the circumstances of China, Korea, Vietnam, or Eastern Europe. Marxist theory, of whatever stamp, should have predicted failure for DK, if not already in 1975, when it could still have been reasonably supposed that Cambodia would follow the Vietnamese model in cooperation with that country, at least as soon as the emptying of the cities indicated that the Cambodian case was going to be a peasantist revolution of the purest sort, with features which had appeared in earlier peasant revolts.

Furthermore, no other ‘communist’ vanguard has so quickly and so abjectly given up their ideological goals - partly, perhaps, out of shock. It is certainly safe to assume that they did not foresee, let alone plan, the unsavory developments of 1975-79. They were petty-bourgeois radicals overcome by peasantist romanticism and serve as a perfect illustration of Lenin’s target in his strictures against “petty-bourgeois revolutionism, which smacks of anarchism … and easily goes to revolutionary extremes, but is incapable of perseverance, organization, discipline, steadiness.” He castigated "the instability of such revolutionism, its barrenness, and its tendency to turn rapidly into submission, apathy, phantasms and even a frenzied infatuation with one bourgeois fad or another."113

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## Lessons of the Cambodian Revolution

The Cambodian case adds another instance to those from which Eric Wolf drew his conclusion that peasants, as “Marxists have long argued,” cannot make a revolution. Wolf added, “without outside leadership”; and the Cambodian case is doubly instructive in showing that even with outside leadership, such as the petty-bourgeois intellectuals of DK, a peasant revolution. may still be a failure when the peasant element is so strong that the outside leaders are pulled along with it. Even having done what Wolf said other peasant revolutions had failed to do, “lay hold of the state, of the cities which house the center of control,” the Cambodian revolution did not make use of their revolutionary potential but destroyed them, true to the desires of peasant rebels for whom "the state is a negative quantity, an evil to be replaced … by their own ‘homemade’ social order."114

Regis Debray went further than Wolf, saying that the outside petty bourgeois leadership should be pulled along by the peasant element, making peasant “aspirations their program of action.” In this and in several other aspects, the DK leadership acted as Debray said revolutionaries in peasant-dominated societies should, but with devastating results. This means that much greater attention must be given to structural differences among peasant societies, and one need go no further than Wolf to see that the Cuban countryside, from whose experiences Debray drew his lessons, was much different from the Cambodian.

The former held a “large rural proletariat [about 10% of the total population], severed from any ownership of the land and forced to sell its labor power in an open labor market,” and whose aspirations “constitute[d] one of the major sources of support for the revolutionary government after its advent to power.” Such a group “is not a peasantry,” and, as Wolf quotes anthropologist Sidney Mintz, they “neither have nor (eventually) want land … they prefer standardized wage minimums, maximum work weeks, adequate medical and educational services, increased buying power,” all of which, I should say, require the maintenance of urban administration and services, as was done in Cuba.115

The Cambodian case supports still another of Wolf’s conclusions, that it is the “landowning ‘middle peasantry’ or a peasantry located in a peripheral area outside the domain of landlord control” which have the “minimal tactical freedom required to challenge their overlord” and become a revolutionary force.

Poor peasants and landless laborers “completely within the power domain” of their employers “are unlikely to pursue the course of rebellion, unless they are able to rely on some external power to challenge the power which constrains them.” Moreover, when members of those tactically mobile middle peasant families go to work in towns, they keep contact with and return to their villages, becoming transmitters of “urban unrest and political ideas.” Poor or landless peasants cut ties with the land.116

One of the peculiarities of Cambodian society was that landlordism was not a serious problem and virtually all of the country population were middle or peripheral peasants in Wolf's sense; and because of the lack of industrial development, almost all who went to towns for work kept contact with their rural families and friends. The revolutionary potential of the Cambodian rural population was in those respects even greater than in the more heavily exploited cases studied by Wolf; and their revolutionary anger was directed, not at rural exploiters - landlords - but at towns, the centers of the usury networks. The war which spilled over from Vietnam to be exacerbated by American intervention proved to be the external force which Wolf posited as necessary to liberate peasants from the constraints of their own society.117

Cambodian peasants, then, to apply Wolf's analysis, would not have made a revolution on their own, the war was a major factor in engendering Pol Pot-ism, and the Cambodian peasants not only became the first peasants to take power but exercised it with unexpected thoroughness.

The 'homemade' quality of DK was not at all concealed and should have been given as much careful attention by those on the left who had been favorable to the revolution as was perhaps given in certain other quarters.

It is clear now that when Ieng Sary told ASEAN in April 1977 that "we are not communists … we are revolutionaries" and do not "belong to the commonly accepted grouping of communist Indochina," he was

being absolutely truthful.118 DK was perfectly willing to move closer to the Asian capitalist countries, implicitly against Vietnam. After January 1979 the DK remnants moved even farther in that direction, finally renouncing any kind of socialism and offering to become clients of the U.S. in a new campaign to roll back communism in Indochina,119 Pol Pot, like Son Ngoc Thanh, has gone full circle: radical student - active guerilla fighter and revolutionary - anti-Vietnamese nationalist - finally offering support to the U.S. against revolution in Indochina.

The development of DK is instructive for other questions as well. Ever since the Russian Revolution, particularly after Eastern Europe turned communist, followed a few years later by China, those western anti-communists perspicacious enough to recognize the inevitability, or even the desirability, of some degree of revolutionary change in those societies have given attention to their peasant character and to the relative merits of nationalism versus communism as the dominant character of a revolution. It has been generally held in such circles that the communists betrayed the peasants and that the SRs in Russia, or agrarian populists in Eastern Europe, should have won and made a revolution in favor of the dominant class, the peasantry. Before 1949 western sympathizers of the Chinese revolutionaries used to describe them as ‘agrarian reformers’ rather than communists, and friends of Vietnam also argued that there the revolution would be different because nationalism would triumph over communism, as it had in Yugoslavia, which was seen as a relatively ‘good’ communist power because of its presumed nationalist independence from the communist bloc.

David Mitrany asked whether Russia could not have developed into a socialistic commonwealth without resort to class war “by following the Populist ideal” nurtured by the old Russian Populists and SRs of "a peasant society ruled chiefly by a peasant movement."120 He was nevertheless concerned that a peasant political system might be too vulnerable to counter-revolution. Radkey was less troubled by that possibility and, obviously sympathetic to their anti-Bolshevik struggle, tended to be exculpatory about the atrocities of the Tambov peasant rebels, passing them off as tactics “of the weaker side in warfare” which they were compelled to adopt since they "could not be burdened with the care of prisoners."121

As we have seen above, Yugoslav nationalism was not in opposition to communism, and the Yugoslavs gradually moved away from chauvinism as they became more Marxist in their economic policies. Thus the ‘communist’ state which for non-communist outsiders shows the most ‘human face’ has become less populist, less nationalist, and more Marxist than in its beginnings.

China and Vietnam too have shown that those who described them as only ‘agrarian reformers’ or as patriotic nationalists more than communists were mistaken. Both consider themselves communist, and their strong feelings of nationalism have not altered their social and economic goals.

Cambodia, however, is a case in which nationalism, populism, and peasantism really won out over communism, and with what results

we have seen all too clearly. It now appears fortunate that those who predicted a predominance of agrarian nationalism over Marxism in China and Vietnam were mistaken, and the nostalgic vision of a Socialist Revolutionary victory in Russia with “a peasant society ruled chiefly by a peasant movement” now provides ample food for second thought.

After the catalogue of unexpected twists and turns, it is comforting to be able to end with one example of perfect consistency and predictability - the present cooperation between the DK remnants and the United States government. Somewhere in the U.S. military and intelligence establishment, Ieng Sary’s statements in 1977 and the anti-Vietnamese drift in DK in general were given due consideration, and it was realized that the victory of chauvinism over Marxism would make DK a useful partner, whatever its excesses.

Since then the CIA has tried to whitewash the worst massacres in order to make the DK regime appear less destructive than its replacement; and the U.S. is giving support to a DK restoration.122 The U.S. treatment of DK, like its reaction to the Indonesian massacre of 1965 and the policy pursued in El Salvador, shows that mass murder is tolerable so long as it is on the right side - the bloodbath is then benign.

### FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 5

1. Khmer Thmei Nos. 7 and 8, November 23 and 26, 1954.

2. Khmer Kraok No. 1, January 11, 1952, to No. 20, March 21, 1952.

3. Punnakar (newspaper of the Renovation political party, headed by Lon Nol) No. 130, January 22, 1953; Sihanouk interview with a U.P.I. correspondent in La Liberté (newspaper, Phnom Penh) No. 674, January 26, 1953, translated in Punnakar No. 133, February 26, 1953. See also letter from Sihanouk to President Auriol, March 5, 1953: "The policy of France holds the risk of allowing the Cambodians to throw themselves into the arms of Son Ngoc Thanh, thus of Communism" (in Gouvernement Royal du Cambodge, Livre jaune sur les revendications de l'indépendance du Cambodge [Phnom Penh, 1953], p. 17).

4. Khmer Kraok No. 19, March 18, 1952.
5. Interviews with former Thanhist activists, including Thach Sary and Dom Tal, in 1971-72. Military affairs in Battambang were transferred to the Cambodian government in 1951 with Lon Nol in charge.

6. Khmer Thmei No. 2, November 5, 1954. Date of meeting given as November 2. No article by Schmid on his interview with Khmer Thmei or on Nehru's visit to Son Ngoc Thanh appeared in Der Spiegel, which the previous month had published two of Schmid's pieces from Saigon (Der Spiegel, October 6 and 13, 1954). Neither is Nehru's visit to Thanh recorded in Keesing's Contemporary Archives, which note only in the issue for November 13-20, 1954, p. 13890, that Nehru went to Saigon on October 31, then "after visiting Phnom-Penh [sic] ... where he met King Norodom Sihanouk . .. Nehru returned to

Calcutta on November 2," the same day on which he was alleged to have stopped in Siemreap to see Thanh. A brief visit could have been fitted into that schedule.

7. Norodom Sihanouk, Chroniques de guerre et d'espoir, p. 43. See also Asiaweek, April 27, 1979, p. 34. It is true that the Pol Pot communists and the Thanhists shared one major goal - overthrow Sihanouk and his courtier regime; and an allegedly communist publication of 1966, Reaksmei Kraham, claimed that Cambodian independence had been won by the resistance forces, that the Sangkum was oppressive, and that the people should mobilize around the slegan "stand up, overthrow Sihanouk and save Kampuchea," since Sihanouk only supports and favors the corrupt who steal the people's money - all of which was also pure Thanhism (see Ben Kiernan, thesis).

8. Both Tioulong, one of Sihanouk's closest collaborators in the 1960s, and Penn Nouth served in Thanh's cabinet in 1945; and"in Charit Khmer (see above, p. 6), Bun Chan Mol, then a Thanhist, describes the enthusiasm of his nephews, Thiounn Mum, Thiounn Prasith, Thiounn Chhum, and Thiounn Thioeun, for his political activities. In addition, Khmer Kraok No. 3, January 22, 1952, reporting on a meeting of a new pro-Thanh students' association, noted the presence of Thiounn Thioeun, now DK Minister of Health, and "Miss Ponnary," almost certainly Khieu Ponnary, Mrs. Pol Pot.

9. In FEER, December 5, 1980, pp. 14-15, leng Sary was reported as expressing satisfaction with Reagan's election victory, and he

admitted association with anti-communist guerillas in southern Laos. FEER also reported a meeting between Son Sen and Phoumi Nosavan. In an August 1980 interview with Stephen Heder, Thiounn Mum said DK hoped for U.S. aid, and he asked, "if there are no DK forces, then how can the forces which these Americans support in Vietnam and Laos develop? Kampuchea is the key .... "

10. I assume there is no need to explain why an objective investigation of a revolution, even one which ended so miserably as the Cambodian, is of interest, or that I do not see revolution, per se, as bad, or consider DK simply as bad people who did bad things and the 1970 status quo as the best of all possible worlds for Cambodia.
11. For example, Kampuchea Dossier II, p. 12. See also Burchett, Triangle, pp. 3-4, where DK is compared to the Nazi regime. Some of the same questions to be treated below were discussed, and some of the same conclusions reached, by Serge Thion, "The Cambodian Idea of Revolution," in Chandler and Kiernan, eds., Revolution and its Aftermath in Kampuchea.

12. Samir Amin, Imperialism and Unequal Development (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977), pp. 147, 151-152.
13. Malcolm Caldwell, The Wealth of Some Nations (London: Zed Press, 1977), pp. 88, 131.
14. Peter F. Bell, "Marxist Scholarship on Thailand: the Work of E. Thadeus Flood (1932-1977)," Builetin of Concerned Asian Scholars 10, 1 (1978), p. 37.
15. Friedrich Engels, Soziales aus Russland, quoted in Umberto Melotti, Marx and the Third World, p. 136.

16. Melotti, p. 128.

17. Correspondence with Vera Zasulich and Marx-Engels Preface to the 2nd Russian edition of the Communist Manifesto, quoted in Melotti, pp. 130-131.

18. Quoted in Melotti, p. 131.

19. For discussions of the Asiatic Mode of Production see Lawrence Krader, The Asiatic Mode of Production: Sources, Development and Critique in the Writings of Karl Marx (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975); Marian Sawer, Marxism and the Question of the Asiatic Mode of Production (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977); Melotti.

20. Some Marxists now refuse the name 'socialism' to the Soviet system, and Melotti has adopted 'Bureaucratic Collectivism,' which he considers a progressive formation potentially on the way to socialism (pp. 149-151, 154-155). Without contesting his analysis I shall continue here, for convenience sake, to use traditional terms.

21. Isaac Deutscher, "The Unfinished Revolution," New Left Review 43 (May-June 1967), p. 33.

22. Harry J. Benda and Lance Castles, "The Samin Movement," Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde, Vol. 125, Part 2 (1969), pp. 207-240. The villagers of Banteay Chhmar, above, pp. 1-3, were similar.

23. I assume no one would argue that cultural mores change immediately along with the economic base or mode of production, nor deny that there are cultural lags, or

superstructure-to-superstructure influences. It is clear that different degrees of regimentation and discipline, other things being equal, are more or less acceptable depending on what is perceived as normal in any given culture.

24. In a conversation with David Chandler in Bangkok on August 29, 1981, Nhiek Tioulong, one of Sihanouk's most powerful collaborators, related that during his term as Finance Minister in 1951 peasants refused to pay taxes and the government did not consider it expedient to try to force them. In the 1960s there were new efforts to increase revenue, and in 1965, in Battambang, I listened to a district (srok) chief explaining to his sub-district (khum) officials that the new tax regulations did not constitute an increase in tax rates as such, but only an increased assessment of the quality of each category of agricultural land.

25. See Kiernan, "Samlaut"; Meyer, Sourire, pp. 192-193, 248.
26. See above, chapter 1, note 72; chapter 3, note 122; chapter 4, pp. 198-199.

27. Resentment by Cambodian intellectuals of Vietnamese attitudes at the University of Hanoi (1942-45) and later in Paris was expressed by the DK officials Dr. Thiounn Thioeun and Thiounn Chhum to Jan Myrdal. See his "Why There is Famine in Kampuchea," Southeast Asia Chronicle No. 77 (February 1981), pp. 16-19. According to Thiounn Mum in an interview with Stephen Heder on August 4, 1980, the first important clash between some of the future leaders of DK and the

Vietnamese occurred at the Berlin Youth Festival in July 1951 (I wish to thank Heder for a transcript of the interview).

28. See above, pp. 99, 123, 149. In the same interview cited above, Thiounn Mum told Heder that "Ta Mok and Ta Pauk [Pok] are exceptions: they are a different matter" (that is, neither intellectuals nor associated with the old Indochina Communist Party).

29. Greater detail appears in the dissertation of Ben Kiernan (chapter 1, note 37), from whom I obtained this information.

30. Heder, "From Pol Pot," pp. 7-14. A perfect example of convergence of the new nationalist and anti-royalist elite with the Pol Pot peasantist tendency is that of the Thiounn brothers, Mum, Thioeun, Chhum, and Prasith.

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31. Charles Meyer, New York Times, May 16, 1975, quoted in Malcolm Caldwell's South East Asia, p. 43:"Marxist intellectuals were learning from the peasants ... all in the context of the peasants' experience and with their participation."

32. Regis Debray, Révolution dans la révolution et autres essais(Paris: Francois Maspero, 1969), p. 197.

33. Doreen Warriner, Economics of Peasant Farming, p. xii; Revolution in Eastern Europe, pp. x, xii; Eric R. Wolf, Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century, p. 32; W. E. Willmott, "Analytical Errors of the Kampuchean Communist Party," Pacific Affairs 54, 2 (Summer 1981), pp. 209-227.

34. Effective private ownership in many parts of the country must have been disrupted by the war.
35. Khieu Samphan, Cambodia's Economy and Industrial Development, trans. by Laura Summers, Data Paper 111, Southeast Asia Project, Dept. of Asian Studies, Cornell University, March 1979. On List see pp. 75-76.
36. See chapter 1, above, p. 22.

37. In 1970-71 I had personal knowledge of potential entrepreneurs with sufficient capital to start small family-owned manufacturing plants, but who, during the last years of Sihanouk's regime, were discouraged by the knowledge that success could lead to pressure for 'voluntary contributions' to the state or to takeover by state agencies in the interests of 'national development.' One important factor leading to the Lon Nol coup of March 1970 was a conflict between the bureaucratic pseudo-capitalists of Sihanouk's entourage and a more technocratic efficiency-conscious group who wanted Cambodian development to approach real capitalism under a functioning parliamentary democratic regime.

38. This is alleged in the DK Livre Noir, Phnom Penh, September 1978, pp. 30, 38, and although that publication cannot be treated as

ipso facto reliable, that particular allegation fits the circumstances. It also seems confirmed inferentially by the Vietnamese explanation published by Nayan Chanda, FEER, April 21, 1978, p. 18.

39. Many urban evacuces allege this; and it was observed in Battambang by Yugoslav journalists who visited Cambodia in 1978 (BBC, Summary of World Broadcasts, FE/5801/B/3-8, April 29, 1978).

40. Melotti, pp. 147-149.
41. Ibid., pp. 148, 150-151.
42. William H. Shaw, Marx's Theory of History (London: Hutchinson Publishing Group, 1978), p. 63.

43. For one explanation of how this could occur see Jonathan Friedman, System, Structure and Contradiction, The Evolution of 'Asiatic' Social Formations (Copenhagen: National Museum of Denmark, 1979).

44. It must be emphasized that the conception of the AMP as static is an error. It would be more correct to consider 'AMP' as a process of development, different from what occurred in the West, from primitive communities through, with respect to Southeast Asia, the classical states of Angkor, Pagan and Central Java.

45. Two specific examples of dissatisfaction among the base people are of interest: Mat Ly, PRK Deputy Minister of Agriculture, said that for the elections of 1976, rules which gave political rights only to Full Rights and Candidate categories of the population were not followed;

voting was carried out at work sites where all ballotted, thus placing the urban evacuees in the same position as base peasants (interview in Phnom Penh, August 28, 1981). The confession of a Tuol Sleng guard (chapter. 3, note 298, above) contains the complaint that he and his comrades were on occasion forced to pull plows, just like the 'prisoners.'

46. Jon 'Halliday, "The North Korean Enigma," New Left Review 127 (May-June 1981), p. 18. Traditional Korea was known as the 'Hermit Kingdom,' was very xenophobic, and had a rigidly - for western eyes, oppressively - structured society (see my remarks in note 23, above).

47. Burchett, Triangle, pp. 64, 66, 115, 133. The same has been asserted by Norodom Sihanouk in his Chroniques de guerre et d'espoir, p. 42 ..
48. Franz Schurmann in Communist China, Vol. 3 of China Readings, ed. by Schurmann and Orville Schell (Penguin Books, 1968), p. 121; Choh-Ming Li, in ibid., pp. 191-198.
49. Maurice J. Meisner, Mao's China: A History of the People's Republic, p. 341; Kiernan, "Conflict," pp. 8-9.
50. Meisner, p. 311.
51. Ibid., pp. 312, 315.
52. Ibid., pp. 317-319.
53. Ibid., pp. 341-342.
54. Ibid., pp. 344-345.

55. Burchett, Triangle, pp. 64, 115. In the latter context Burchett does note some of the significant differences, but because of the

propaganda line which he adopted he was unable to see that they in fact constituted evidence against any relationship between the Cultural Revolution and DK policies. The non-Marxist character of the DK programs was also emphasized by Thion in his paper cited in note 11, above.

56. Meisner, pp. 205, 212.
57. Ibid., pp. 235-236.
58. Ibid., p. 205.
59. Jon Halliday, op. cit., from which all information about Korea reproduced here has been taken.
60. Joan Robinson, cited in Halliday, p. 31.
61. Halliday, p. 26.
62. Bernard Fall, Le Viet-Minh, La Republique Democratique du Viet-Nam 1945-1960, pp. 229-260, 288-289.
63. Kiernan, "Conflict," p. 22.
64. Nicolas Spulber, The Economics of Communist Eastern Europe, pp. 13-16, 225-226, 238-241.
65. Dennison-Rusinow, The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974, pp. 16, 66.
66. Hugh Seton-Watson, The East European Revolution, p. 168, "double war"; Rusinow, p. 3, "three wars" concurrently.
67. Rusinow, pp. 4-6.
68. Seton-Watson, pp. 231-233; Rusinow, p. 19.
69. Seton-Watson, p. 234.
70. Ibid., p. 219.
71. Rusinow, p. 15.
72. Doreen Warriner, Revolution in Eastern Europe, pp. 53, 105.

73. Seton-Watson, pp. 238, 267; Warriner, Revolution, p. 137.
74. Seton-Watson, p. 267; Rusinow, pp. 21, 35-36.

75. Warriner, Revolution, pp. 51, 128; Seton-Watson, p. 168. Seton-Watson only with reluctance admits favor to the peasants, but shows the Yugoslav difference - 'linked prices.'

76. Warriner, Revolution, p. 51.
77. Rusinow, pp. 21, 36, 62, 78.

78. Warriner, p. 19; and quotations from, respectively, Rusinow, p. 22; Seton-Watson, p. 220; Rusinow, p. 22; Seton-Watson, p. 224.
79. Warriner, p. 51.
80. Rusinow, p. 23; Wariner, Revolution, pp. 55-56, 62; Seton-Watson, p. 270. Seton-Watson, in spite of the evidence which he cited, wished to deny favoritism to the peasantry.
81. Seton-Watson, pp. 168, 312; Rusinow, p. 17.

82. Yugoslavia, Opsta Drzavna Statistika, Statisticki godisnyak. Annuaire Statistique 1929-1940 (Beograd, 1941). United Nations, Demographic Yearbook 1955, p. 183. Rusinow, p. 19, says the dead included 90,000 skilled workers and 40,000 intellectuals.

83. Warriner, Revolution, p. 53.
84. Rusinow, pp. 37-38; Warriner, pp. 53, 105, 125.
85. This information has been summarized from Nicholas C. Pano, The People's Republic of Albania (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968).

86. Doreen Warriner, Economics of Peasant Farming, pp. 137, 166-167, xxii, respectively.

87. Of course, this critique of the DK experience still leaves open the question of whether Cambodia could have made a successful revolution emphasizing industry, without integration into a larger polity, or considerable foreign aid. Probably not, given the lack of industrial raw materials; and the country's objective weakness was compounded by a debilitating foreign policy. Cambodia is probably one of those countries which cannot move beyond a basic peasant economic level, either 'capitalist' or 'socialist,' without becoming a part of some wider world.

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88. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism (Moscow: Progress), pp. 108, 114, 119.
89. Eric Hobsbawm, review of Raymond Carr, Spain 1808-1939, in New Left Review 11/12 (1966), p. 40.
90. Hugh Thomas, The Spanish Civil War (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961), p. 42.
91. Yathay, p. 314.

92. Franz Borkenau, The Spanish Cockpit (London: Faber, 1937), pp. 15, 83, 97, 166 ff .; George Orwell, Homage to Catalonia (London: Seeker and Warburg, 1954), on destruction of churches, pp. 50, 53.

93. Thomas, pp. 288-329. Pol Pot, in his long speech of September 27, 1977, said, "If our people could build Angkor Wat ... they can do anything" (quoted in FEER, October 21, 1977); FBIS, October 4, 1977,

p. H26.
94. David C. Cattell, Communism and the Spanish Civil War (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), p. 2.
95. Borkenau, p. 33; Thomas, pp. 42-43.
96. D. W. Treadgold, Lenin and his Rivals (London: Methuen, 1955), p. 45.
97. Eric R. Wolf, Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century, p. 86, from Sidney S. Harcave, First Blood: the Russian Revolution of 1905.
98. Wolf, p. 88, from David Mitrany, Marx Against the Peasant: A Study in Social Dogmatism; and Wolf, p. 90, from Robert G. Wesson, Soviet Communes.

99. Oliver H. Radkey, The Sickle under the Hammer: the Russian Socialist Revolutionaries in the Early Months of Soviet Rule, p. 95.
100. Oliver H. Radkey, The Unknown Civil War in Soviet Russia, pp. 74-76, 78
101. Ibid., p. 77.
102. Ibid., p. 83.
103. Ibid., pp. 173-174, 319, 321.
104. David Marr, Vietnamese Tradition on Trial 1920-1945 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 385-386.
105. David Mitrany, Marx Against the Peasant, pp. 153-156.
106. Warriner, Revolution, pp. x, xi.

107. See the chapters by Donald McRae, Peter Wiley, and Angus Stewart in Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner, Populism: its Meaning and National Characteristics.
108. Peter Worsley, in Ionescu and Gellner, pp. 212-250; see p. 244.'
109. Worsley, p. 239.
110. Ionescu, in ibid., pp. 106-109. On Sorokin, p. 107.

111. This is clear from Banyaha sahakor ("The Cooperative Question," 20286 Phnom Penh, 1964), by Hou Yuon, who is considered one of the 'good guys' of the Cambodian revolution, perhaps because, having disappeared in 1975, he cannot be associated with any of the disasters of the following years. In his book he held that high-level cooperatives were advantageous in that there was no 'problem' of private property, that a change of mentality must take place for them to be successful, and he foresaw the immediate establishment of high-level cooperatives of 'new' people on new land (Banyaha, pp. 101-103). Of course, he did not advocate the use of force which became prevalent in DK.

112. Labedz, "Under Western Eyes," p. 47.
113. V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder," Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 32.
114. Wolf, pp. 294-295.
115. Debray, op. cit .; Wolf, pp. 257-258.
116. Wolf, pp. 291, 290, 292, respectively.

117. Willmott, pp. 220-222. The local Cambodian analysis into rich-middle-poor is significant only in Cambodian circumstances.

Although Willmott is correct in his identification of the true nature of exploitation in the Cambodian countryside, I believe he is mistaken in concluding that the peasants were not potentially revolutionary except in a nationalist sense (p. 226). The fate of the cities and the eager exploitation of their evacuated inhabitants by peasants demonstrates the contrary; Wolf, pp. 290-291.

118. FEER, April 29, 1977, p. 11.
119. Above, pp. 255-256 and note 9.
120. Mitrany, Marx Against the Peasant, p. 104.
121. Radkey, The Unknown Civil War, pp. 165, 174.
122. Vickery, "Democratic Kampuchea: CIA to the Rescue."

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## Postscript: 1983

The favorable trends for the PRK seemed to continue into early 1983, even though there is less firm information this year because fewer qualified foreign observers have visited and written about Cambodia than in 1981-82.

Edmund McWilliams, of the United States Embassy in Bangkok and one of the American anti-Vietnamese hardliners, admitted that Vietnamese forces in Cambodia had been reduced in 1982 from about 180,000 to 150,000,1 which gave the lie to stories that the

Vietnamese partial withdrawal had not been genuine.2 There was also continuing improvement in local food supply, even if the country still required some food aid in 1983.3

Of great interest was the statement by former U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia Emory Swank, after a visit in February. He commented on the amazing progress of the previous four years, “the effectiveness of Vietnamese and PRK governance,” the generous aid from the Soviets and Vietnamese, the illusory nature of the DK coalition aspirations, and the malevolence of continuing the civil war.4

Unfortunately, more notice may have been taken in the U.S. of the Washington Post article by Elizabeth Becker, who among visitors to Cambodia was alone in sketching a very negative picture.5 She had visited Cambodia at about the same time as Swank, but an unwary reader comparing their impressions would scarcely have realized that they were writing about the same country. Becker alleged that the post-1979 recovery had ended, that an obsession with political indoctrination hindered essential work, that the government was run by survivors of the Pol Pot regime who guiltily refused to conduct an investigation of DK or to permit access to the Tuol Sleng archives where their secrets are recorded. She also emphasized the perilous state of the Cambodian people’s health and the low level of medical care; and she blamed the economic stagnation on a failure of the Soviet bloc to provide aid. Perhaps the greatest surprise was her claim that the PRK government had not “allowed the religious revival it promised … the authorities have suppressed Buddhism . … pagodas are locked” except for a few holidays.6

It may be true that the pace of recovery slowed in 1982 and the lack of expected progress in industry is particularly disappointing, but it is dishonest to blame those circumstances on the modalities of Soviet aid. In contrast to the "refusal of the international aid community, led by the United States, to give more than emergency aid to Cambodia,"7 and who in early 1983 pledged a paltry $14.2 million for UN Cambodian relief operations, all but $1.2 million from Sweden for operations along the Thai border, the Soviet Union in 1982 alone delivered $82 million worth of industrial and consumer goods.

In addition they sent road and bridge equipment, restored rubber plantations, rebuilt telephone and power networks, and contributed to technical education, fisheries, and medical facilities.8 Indeed the magnitude of the Soviet aid has incensed the U.S .- led bloc because it is developmental, designed to keep Cambodia out of Becker's alleged 'cycle of poverty' which the U.S. and ASEAN have sought to maintain in order to exert political pressure on the PRK and Vietnam.

The inaccuracies in Becker's description of the PRK government are clear from what has been presented above (chapter 4). The DK survivors are from the anti-Pol Pot faction and administered the DK zone where brutalities were fewest. Their records are known, and they do not fear reprisals from their people. As for political indoctrination, it may well be necessary given the politically mixed nature of the administrative personnel, and no refugee from the PRK whom I have met alleged indoctrination as a reason for the inadequacies of life within Cambodia, nor as a cause of flight.

Moreover, what is wrong with ‘Indochinese solidarity,’ which refugees, in agreement with Becker, say is being inculcated? Is it worse than the anti-Vietnamese racist propaganda of the three preceding regimes?

Health care and nutrition certainly do not equal the standards of the affluent West, nor the best that Phnom Penh could offer before 1970, but half or more of Cambodia’s surviving doctors have been enticed away through the refugee system built up on the Thai border by western ‘aid to Cambodia.’

An interesting comparison which an investigative journalist might make, if he or she were really interested in discussing problems of development, would be with Thailand, where there has been no war, foreign invasion, carpet bombing, nor revolution, where foreign investment is massive and the sympathy of the most advanced western powers is enjoyed, yet where health authorities, as in Cambodia, are concerned about serious malnutrition among half or more of the country’s children, and where only 30% of the population enjoy a safe water supply.9 Interestingly, since 1980 substantial foreign ‘refugee’ aid near the border has been given to ‘Affected Thai Villagers,’ whose health and living standard, much to the shock of foreign aid personnel, were found to be little better than the condition of Cambodian refugees.

On two points Becker was completely mistaken. The Tuol Sleng archives are not closed. Every qualified foreign researcher has been given virtual carte blanche to examine them; and Becker herself, who

not knowing Khmer is unqualified, was allowed to copy dossiers there. Neither is it true that Buddhism has been suppressed and temples closed; and I finally discovered the probable source of such a rumor in a circumstance which provides reason to doubt the value of Becker's investigative efforts.

During a visit to KID in September 1983 I talked with a former Ministry of Foreign Affairs employee who had left Phnom Penh several months earlier. She remembered that there had been, late in 1981 or in 1982, discussion within the government about closing one Phnom Penh temple, Wat Keo Preah Phloeung, located near the river just south of the city center. She did not know the reason for such a plan - it may have been the large number of temples in that area - but in any case it was not carried out and Wat Keo Preah Phloeung remained open.

Knowledge of the government's original intentions, however, no doubt filtered down to the population and led to a rumor about suppression of Buddhism, after the manner of the mass 'Yellow Rain' hysteria documented by Grant Evans among some of the Hmong from Laos.10 Such rumors are then seized upon by the KPNLF-DK-Sihanouk propaganda apparatus and fed to sympathetic western media.

Indeed during 1983 both the propaganda and military activities of the coalition have stepped up, no doubt because of increased aid from their patrons; and even if the coalition has suffered defeat, at least

militarily, their activities do endanger the fragile political and social balance within Cambodia.

Militarily their efforts appear to be provocative, to goad the Vietnamese into attacks on the Thai border which will in turn force more international military intervention against the Vietnamese and PRK. Thus as reported in the Bangkok Post:

In mid-December 1982 Son Sann and Sihanouk forces launched fierce attacks on Heng Samrin troops 10km from the border, opposite Nong Chan, Nong Samet, and Ban Sangae. At the same time the Thai Assistant Army Chief of Staff, Lt-Gen. Chavalit Yongchaiyuth, assured the public that a Vietnamese attack on Thailand was unlikely.11

Ten days later the DK forces had pressed their attack successfully and had overrun the Vietnamese-occupied village of Yeang Dangkum in Cambodia, “sweeping the residents with them and capturing several tons of weapons.” They continued against neighboring villages in a week-long series of attacks.12

In response, it was believed, the Vietnamese were “gearing for a Khmer blitz,” and in the face of the expected Vietnamese offensive the Thai government announced that they were moving Cambodian refugees back to the border in a move which some western diplomats interpreted as a "possible prelude to forced repatriation,"13 and which seems incomprehensible unless the goal

was to insure, for propaganda purposes, the maximum number of civilian casualties in the inevitable conflict.

The Vietnamese riposte came a few days later with attacks on Khmer [military - MV] bases opposite Nong Chan; and the names of the places attacked were listed as Ban Prao, Yeang Dangkum, and Sorea, 7km from the border [inside Cambodia], which had been seized by Chea Chhut [KPNLF commander] on December 26.14 The Vietnamese/PRK attempts to retake Yeang Dangkum continued for several days, and were not successful until January 16, 1983, when Yeang Dangkum was finally retaken and artillery shells landed near the Nong Chan refugee camp.15

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A week later a DK counterattack against Vietnamese inside Cambodia was reported; and at the very end of January Chea Chhut's military base as well as the adjoining Nong Chan refugee camp were overrun and destroyed by the Vietnamese and PRK forces in an attack represented in some of the western media as an unprovoked assault on innocent civilians.16

Similarly, when in April the Vietnamese attacked the hard-core DK (Pol Pot) military base at Phnom Chhat, and other coalition bases, it was portrayed as wanton harassment of innocent civilian refugees,

ignoring that as a base for patrols raiding inside Cambodia, Phnom Chhat is a legitimate military target.17 Innocent civilians were involved because the military bases are beside or surrounded by civilian encampments which provide the cover for ‘refugee aid’ supplies of food and medicine to the anti-Phnom Penh forces.

Such dry-season warfare has been part of the annual cycle of events since the retreating Pol Pot forces began to receive succor and support at the Thai border in late 1979; and the only astonishing feature of the 1983 round was the ease with which the Vietnamese/PRK forces destroyed some of the reputedly toughest coalition bases, in spite of increased military aid to the latter by their Chinese and ASEAN backers. The DK coalition, as a military threat to Cambodia, suddenly appeared weaker than ever.

Still the fate of the PRK, and prospects for peaceful development within Cambodia, are affected by the coalition, by the Vietnamese military presence which it invites, and by the degree of isolation which the U.S.- led bloc has succeeded in imposing on both Vietnam and Cambodia. Becker was probably right in suggesting that the rate of progress has slowed, and 1983 may even be a year of relative stagnation. Certainly, in spite of their military reverses, the coalition has been able to step up its propaganda activities, without successful denial being disseminated in the western media.

In chapter 4, above, I noted and criticized a number of anti-Vietnamese and anti-PRK stories brought out by refugees, or propagated in the Khmer Serei, now DK coalition, bases on the

border in 1979-80. Since then, as regularly as the dry season warfare, there have been annual propaganda campaigns now led, because of his respectability in western eyes, by Son Sann and his milieu.

One of the constantly recurring stories has been that the Vietnamese are systematically destroying Cambodian culture, in particular through the imposition of Vietnamese language study in Cambodian schools.18 But just as I demonstrated the falsity of this story in 1980, and determined its continuing falsity on the spot in 1981, questioning of recent arrivals from Cambodia in KID in September 1983 revealed that the alleged Vietnamese plan to 'Vietnamize' the Khmer school syllabus has 'not yet' been put into effect. I did indeed meet one man, a former teacher, who at first asserted that Vietnamese language instruction was being forced on Cambodian students, but when I questioned him for further details of the program he admitted that the 'plan' was not implemented.

Incidentally, that informant, after spending the DK years in Damban 22 of the East Zone, refused to return to work in the PRK school system, and lived for 4 years in Phnom Penh as a private teacher of French and mathematics, earning 400-600 riels a month, more than any state employee.19 He decided to leave after acquaintances in the administration criticized him for refusing to work for the state schools.

Tales of physical brutality are another, and in 1983 increasingly, common theme; and some of them, from the semi-war zone of parts of the Northwest, must have a basis in fact. Others, however, are

examples of black propaganda or mass hysteria. In August 1982 KID and the border were swept by rumors that the Vietnamese, in order to stop people from coming to the border, were cutting off ears and noses of those they caught.20 Some refugees even asserted knowledge of such victims in the hospitals of KID, Nong Samet and Nong Chan. A visit to the KID hospital, and questioning of foreign medical personnel from the other locations, revealed that no such case had ever been seen.

By mid-1983 the coalition was alleging widespread pillage, assault, and rape by Vietnamese soldiers in the Northwest.21 Again, in the unsettled conditions of the area, partly brought on by coalition subversion, some misbehavior by soldiers is inevitable, but when questioned privately, refugees' stories indicate that the incidents have probably been isolated, then generalized through rumor and exaggeration.

Two young couples who had recently arrived in KID from the town of Battambang in September 1983 said, when I asked about such stories, that rape and pillage by Vietnamese were occurring. I then enquired if they had direct knowledge of such incidents in their locality. They had not known of any specific incident, because, they said, there was a Vietnamese military post nearby. Apparently such lawlessness only occurs far from centers of authority. Clearly, then, in the disordered situation of the Northwest, Vietnamese proximity means protection, not danger, although that was not the picture my informants wished to present.22

Another theme of coalition propaganda is the settlement of Vietnamese in Cambodia in numbers large enough to constitute colonization, or dilution of Khmer ethnicity. It has even been alleged that Vietnamese are being systematically settled among Khmer at the rate of 1 Vietnamese family for every 10 Khmer, and that Khmer women are now forced to marry Vietnamese.23

All refugees from Phnom Penh and Battambang confirm that some Vietnamese settlement has occurred in urban areas, but they do not confirm that the numbers are excessive, nor that the settlement is organized or for purposes of control. Before the war of 1970-75 there were 4-500,000 Vietnamese residents of Cambodia, most of them natives, who were expelled or who fled to Vietnam during the war and DK period; and the return of that number might represent no more than the resettlement of Cambodian Vietnamese in their old homes. Most of Cambodia's prewar Vietnamese residents were urban shopkeepers and artisans, or inhabitants of fishing villages on the Tonle Sap inland sea and Mekong river, precisely where Vietnamese are reliably reported to be again today.

Moreover, John C. Monjo of the U.S. State Department, and a spokesman for the official U.S. anti-Vietnamese line who cannot be suspected of minimizing Vietnamese 'misdeeds,' has given an estimate of only 150-200,000 Vietnamese settlers in Cambodia. This is a number which Cambodian society can easily assimilate, which must represent mostly returning residents, and which does not, contrary to Monjo, raise "serious questions about Hanoi's long-term intentions towards Kampuchea."24

Neither is there evidence that their return represents “officially sponsored Vietnamese immigration,” as Monjo would have it. In fact, Paul Quinn-Judge, one of the very few Vietnamese-speaking journalist-scholars studying the area, seemed to find the contrary, that most of the Vietnamese in Phnom Penh had come individually for a variety of personal reasons.25

An interesting example of uncontrolled rumor, which I was able to check, was the assertion of the teacher refugee I cited above that the Tonle Sap had been completely closed to Khmer settlement or fishing, and was reserved entirely for Vietnamese. Immediately after talking to him in KID, however, I met a young woman who had worked in a section of the Ministry of Defense in charge of supplying fish to the army, and who knew precisely how fishing on the Tonle Sap is organized. According to her, the system is much like that of prewar times, with the fishing grounds divided into lots which are assigned to villages around the lake with some reserved for state supply. The population, as before, consists of Khmers who have returned to the villages they inhabited before 1975, while returning Vietnamese have reconstructed the floating villages where they also used to live in normal times.

Another woman, who had worked for the PRK Foreign Ministry, remarked that many Khmers from southern Vietnam were settling in Phnom Penh, hastening to add that of course many real Vietnamese were coming too. While those Khmers might be counted as immigrants from Vietnam, they are ethnic Khmer and not seen as a

threat by other Cambodians. Interestingly, Dr. Amos Townsend of the IRC found in August 1983 that of 825 ‘Land Vietnamese’ refugees held at Nong Samet, 300 were Khmers from southern Vietnam and 90 were Cham. That is, nearly half of that group of ‘Vietnamese refugees’ were of emphatically non-Vietnamese ethnicity.26

Thus, although my contacts this year with recent emigrants from Cambodia were few, none of them confirmed the more lurid anti-Vietnamese stories. None knew of forced marriages. Khmer-Vietnamese marriages are still, as before, infrequent, and based on personal choice.

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A more statistically valid picture would require private interviews with people from numerous localities to determine what they have seen and experienced first-hand, without interpretation by KPNLF personnel. All the informants cited above had come from Phnom Penh or the town of Battambang, but I also met one newly arrived man who had precise knowledge of Koh Kor, a rural area near Battambang where he has lived since before 1975, and of nearby Sneng where his adult children live. He flatly denied any Vietnamese settlement in that area, or any kind of problems with the Vietnamese, of whom there are only 2-3 advisers to the khum (sub-district) administration; and he considered the conditions of life there to be

normal. He had come to KID for leprosy treatment, and intended to return to his family upon its completion.

Why then did an estimated 8-10,000 people come to the Thai border during the first 8 months of 1983, assuming that those figures are accurate and significant? One ranking UN official involved with the border told me that he did not consider the number of new arrivals above what would have been normal traffic to be a matter of great concern. Many people, like most of those I have cited above, still come out for personal reasons, often trivial, in a type of emigration only made possible by the existence of the refugee camp system.

There do seem to be, however, new developments which, together with the insecurity of parts of the Northwest, have impelled more people than a year ago to take their chances at the border or as refugees. I find credible the reports that the PRK authorities have begun finally to impose taxes on market activities after the nearly absolute laissez-faire of the previous 3 years.

I also accept the reports that they have begun to conscript young men for military service; and many youths in KID allege that as their only reason for flight. Even more onerous has been conscription, in the Northwest, of men to clear forests for what is termed a 'strategic barrier' along the border with Thailand, apparently of a defensive nature. The men are taken, they say, for 2 weeks to a month, without compensation; and this was the reason given by the two couples from Battambang, cited above, for their decision to escape.27

They also, however, have relatives in France and a cousin who is a prosperous lawyer in Bangkok.

Part of the explanation, then, is flight from impositions which are normal in most modern societies, and it is only feasible because of the artificial escape valve of the border situation.

There is probably also concern that the Pol Pot-dominated coalition, with its international support, may regain control. A recent news story said the Pol Pot forces were gaining new recruits "with gold bullion, cash, and late-model Chinese weapons";28 and in KID in September a man who claimed to be involved in intelligence gathering within Cambodia asserted that the Pol Pot troops had new supplies of gold which they told gullible villagers were U.S. dollars. With this new wealth, of undetermined origin, the Pol Pot troops, according to KPNLF General Dien Del, are able to pay "top prices" for rice from Cambodian peasants,29 which if true may account for some of the new movement toward the border in the desire of peasants to cash in on the new source of profit.

Officially the U.S. may claim to support only Son Sann and Sihanouk, but the fact of their presence in a Pol Pot-dominated coalition remains, and U.S. support for the coalition is not ignored by the Cambodian populace.

Thus Cambodian villagers, whatever their real preferences, may be reluctant to resist or report DK or KPNLF patrols because of the international support they are believed to enjoy; and the villagers'

apparent collusion with the enemy is then punished by PRK and Vietnamese authorities.

But these disruptive effects of the coalition probes are likely to remain restricted to the Northwest, the area from which the negative reports, and most of the new refugees, originate; and another dry-season campaign like the last may cripple the coalition and end their disruptive potential. Meanwhile, the rest of the country is at least maintaining what was achieved in 1979-82, and in food production, the most important area, is slowly increasing output.

So long as peace as a Vietnamese protectorate is perceived as superior to civil war under coalition partners who despise and distrust one another nearly as much as they dislike the Vietnamese, the non-Communist Cambodian administrators, technicians, and intellectuals who have elected to remain to work for the PRK will continue to do their jobs until a new generation without emotional bonds to Sihanouk or to the prewar bourgeoisie grows up to run the country. Out in the agricultural countryside, where most of the people still live, the policies so far followed by the PRK are more favorable to peasants than anything instituted by Sihanouk or Pol Pot, or advocated by Son Sann. Even if peasant life is now being disrupted by conflict in the Northwest, that is not sufficient to cause massive disaffection in the rest of the country; and even if the balance of political forces seems precarious, progress, though slow, may continue.

#### FOOTNOTES - POSTSCRIPT 1983

1. Edmund MeWilliams, "Vietnam in 1982: Onward into the Quagmire," Asian Survey, January 1983, pp. 62, 70.

2. Son Sann, "The Causes of the Suffering of the Cambodian People: A Possible Solution," Contemporary Southeast Asia 4, 4 (March 1983) (Singapore); Nation Review, August 19, 1982, interview with Maj-Gen. Wanchai Ruangtrakul, Chief of Staff of the First Army Region.

3. FEER, December 24, 1982.
4. Ibid., March 17, 1983, pp. 34-35.
5. "Cycle of Poverty," February 28, 1983, p. 1, and "New Rulers Obscure Role of Party Under Pol Pot," March 1, 1983.

6. At the time I wrote a detailed refutation of Becker's allegations, which of course went unacknowledged by the Washington Post. I also sent it to a number of other individuals and media organs with an interest in Cambodia. One response came from Philip Bowring of FEER (letter April 25, 1983), who said they had declined to use Becker's material and who invited me to do a 5th Column piece on Cambodia and the media since 1975, incorporating my critique of Becker. I wrote the piece as suggested, but immediately received another rocket (see above, p. 62) from Derek Davies (May 11, 1983), who was not going to allow me to publish that sort of thing about journalists.

7. Quotation from Becker's Washington Post article.

8. FEER, February 10, 1983, p. 12.

9. Bangkok Post, October 18, 1981, p. 8.

10. Grant Evans, The Yellow Rainmakers (London: Verso, 1983).

11. Bangkok Post, December 18, 1982.

12. Ibid., December 28 and 30, 1982.

13. Ibid., January 1, 1983.

14. Ibid., January 6, 1983.

15. Ibid, January 7, 8, 11 and 17, 1983.

16. Ibid., January 26, 1983; February 1, 1983. A fair description of what happened was written by Barry Wain, Asian Wall Street Journal, February 8, 1983, p. 1.

17. Asian. Wall Street Journal, April 11, 1983; John McBeth, "The border erupts," FEER, April 14, 1983, pp. 14-15; Al Santoli, "The New Indochina War," The New Republic, May 30, 1983, pp. 19-23.

18. Above, pp. 208, 233; and see Son Sann, cited in note 2, above.

19. See above, p. 230.

20. A version of this story also saw print, Nation Review, August 19, 1982.

21. John McBeth, "A New Exodus," FEER, August 25, 1983, pp. 25-26; Jacques Bekaert, "Kampucheans bewail hard times," Bangkok Post, August 27, 1983.

22. This concurs with the informants of Barry Wain, Asian Wall Street Journal, April 5, 1983. "By most accounts" Vietnamese behavior is "exemplary"; for "serious breaches of discipline, such as assault or (r-word for non-consensual coitus/forced sex), soldiers are executed, sources say."

23. Son Sann, cited in note 2, above.

24. Statement by John C. Monjo, Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, September 15, 1983. I wish to thank Carlyle A. Thayer for providing me with a copy.

25. Monjo, loc. cit .; and Paul Quinn-Judge, "The Settlers Show Withdrawal Symptoms," FEER, May 26, 1983, pp. 18-19.

26. Personal communication from Dr. Amos Townsend, Bangkok, September 13, 1983.

27. The fact of such conscription seems confirmed by Barry Wain's interview with the District Chairman of Sisophon, who provided maps of the location of the 'strategic barrier' and described its purpose. See Asian Wall Street Journal, February 8, 1983, p. 1. Refugee accounts of the modalities of conscription, however, vary in their description of the attendant hardships.

28. Jim Wolf, "Vietnamese drive Kampucheans back into the clutches of Pol Pot," The Australian, October 4, 1983, p. 9.
29. Ibid.